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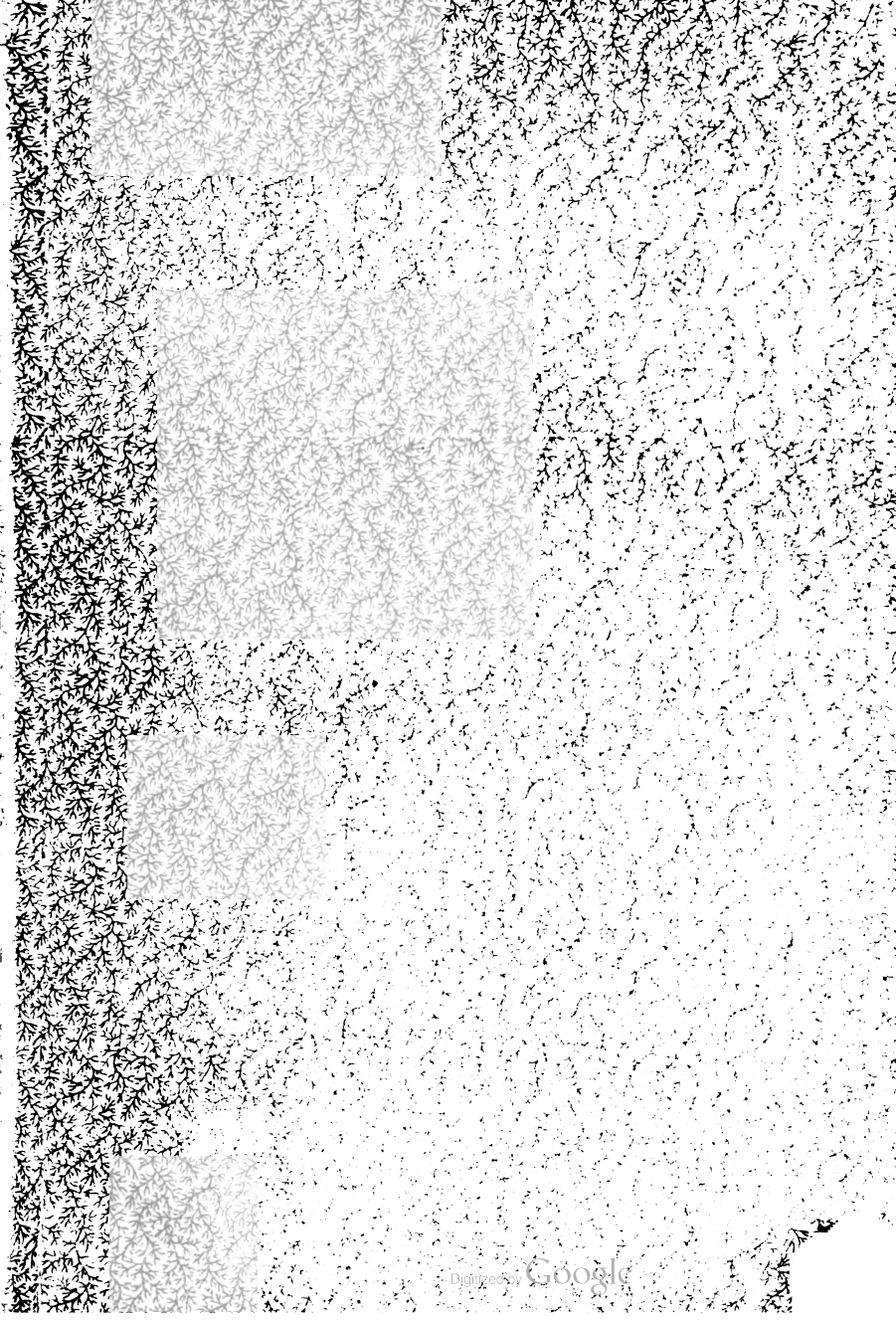
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THE  
LIFE OF MICHAEL DAVITT,

*Founder of the National Land League.*

BY D. B. CASHMAN.

TO WHICH IS ADDED, THE

*Secret History of the Land League.*

BY MICHAEL DAVITT.

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# CONTENTS.

## INTRODUCTION.

	PAGES
A Brief History of British Tyranny in Ireland, from the Invasion in 1170 to the Act of Union in 1800, with an Account of the Penal Enactments in the Different Reigns, . . . . .	7-12

## CHAPTER I.

The Great Land Agitation—Michael Davitt again in a Convict's Garb—Innisfail, . . . . .	13-15
--	-------

## CHAPTER II.

Michael Davitt—His Early Life—Eviction from his Farm Home in Mayo—Emigration, . . . . .	16-19
---	-------

## CHAPTER III.

Davitt as a Literary Man—His Arrest, Trial, and Prison Sufferings, . . . . .	20-29
--	-------

## CHAPTER IV.

From Millbank to Dartmoor—Six Years and Six Months of Agony, . . . . .	30-42
--	-------

## CHAPTER V.

Released on Ticket-of-Leave—Grand Reception in Dublin—Sergeant M'Carthy's Death—Davitt visits Mayo—His First Lecture in England, . . . . .	43-53
--	-------

## CHAPTER VI.

Davitt's First Visit to America—Seed of the Land League Sown by Advanced Nationalists—The New Doctrine Expounded by Davitt—A National Platform Proposed, . . . . .	54-70
--	-------

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## CHAPTER VII.

	PAGES
Why the Farmers were not Fenians—Radical Revolutionists and the Land Question—The "New Departure"—The Abolition of Landlordism, . . . . .	71-72

## CHAPTER VIII.

How Irish Tenant-Farmers are Ground Down by the Landlords—Why the Extremists should Aid the Land Agitation—The Law of Primogeniture Explained—The Ancient Irish Law of <i>Gavel</i> —Statistics relating to Land and Landlords, . . .	73-82
---	-------

## CHAPTER IX.

Davitt's Return to Ireland—The Agitation begun in Mayo—Death of Isaac Butt—Pronouncements by the Catholic Clergy—Famine Clouds appear on the Horizon—Archbishop MacHale Condemns the Leaders of the Agitation—Michael Davitt's Reply, . . . . .	83-96
---	-------

## CHAPTER X.

The Landlords Refuse to Lower the Rents—The Agitators Demand the Abolition of Landlordism—Repeal of the Irish Convention Act—The First National Convention held in Mayo to form a Land League—Appeal to Irish-Americans—Manifesto of the Trustees of the Irish National Fund, . . . . .	97-107
---	--------

## CHAPTER XI.

The Irish National Land League Formed in Dublin—The Distress Increasing—Irish Members Invoke Government Aid—Davitt Arrested—Lodged in Sligo Jail—"On to Balla"—Committed for Trial—Parnell to Chicago—Davitt's Lecture in England, . . .	108-120
--	---------

## CHAPTER XII.

Parnell and Dillon in New York—Great Meeting in Madison Square Garden—Parnell Addresses Congress—The Famine in Ireland—How the Landlords Acted—The Relief Bill—Land Meeting on the spot where Davitt was born, . . . . .	121-129
--	---------

## CHAPTER XIII.

The National Land League Started in America—Davitt again visits the United States—First Land League Convention in New York—America's Aid During the Famine—The Compensation for Disturbance Bill Rejected—Evictions—Davitt in San Francisco—The Ladies' Land League begun—Davitt Leaves for Ireland—Boycotting Boycott—The State Trials—The Coercion Act in Force, . . . . .	130-144
--	---------

## CHAPTER XIV.

PAGES

Davitt Arrested—Again in a Convict's Garb—Portland Prison Described—The Ticket-of-Leave—The News in the House of Commons—Expulsion of Thirty-four Members—The National Land League Convention—No Peace in Ireland while Davitt is in a Convict's Cell, . . . . .	145-155
--	---------

## CHAPTER XV.

The Land League Proposal—Addresses Delivered at Manchester and Liverpool, . . . . .	156-185
---	---------

## CHAPTER XVI.

Mr Davitt on Liberty—The Contrasts between American Freedom and Irish Degradation during the Past Century vividly Portrayed, . . . . .	186-192
--	---------

## CHAPTER XVII.

The Story of the Land War by Michael Davitt—The Origin, History, and Objects of the Land League—The Record of Landlordism—What the People of Ireland are working for—The Secret History of the Land League—Why there is a Land Question at all, . . . . .	193-253
---	---------

## CHAPTER XVIII.

Mr Davitt's Proposals for the Formation of the National Land and Industrial Union of Ireland, . . . . .	254-256
---	---------



# LIFE OF MICHAEL DAVITT,

AND

## HISTORY OF THE LAND LEAGUE.

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### INTRODUCTION.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF BRITISH TYRANNY IN IRELAND, FROM THE INVASION  
IN 1170 TO THE ACT OF UNION IN 1800, WITH AN ACCOUNT OF THE  
PENAL ENACTMENTS IN THE DIFFERENT REIGNS.

“Who remember the past—the days gone by,  
Long wept in song and story;  
When the hunted priest to a cave should fly,  
Or some mountain hollow hoary;  
When your sires’ blood was the gibbets’ dye,  
And their shame their tyrants’ glory?”

“Who remember the past—the fearful past—  
Its deeds of blood and slaughter;  
When the rush of the midnight’s moaning blast  
And sob of the surging water  
But echoed the dirge of your land downcast  
’Neath the wrongs the alien wrought her?”—MERVA.

“WHO remember the past—the fearful past?” asks the poet! Who, being of Celtic birth or blood, or of any race, that having read the dark pages of Ireland’s history—a history of blood and tears—a history born of a monster from a nation’s travail—can ever *forget* the past, or fail to discern the clank of the slave-chain which binds it to the present? That sad history of oppression is still being continued, unrepented of by the oppressor, and borne by the oppressed; but not meekly borne—for the struggle for freedom by a brave people is vigorously continued; and, by brute force alone, coupled with state-craft and treachery, is England enabled to keep her knee upon Ireland’s breast.

Let us glance down the centuries, and for a moment rest the eye of memory on a select few of the notable events in this history, since the landing of Robert Fitz-Stephen, Meyler Fitz-Henry, and others on the coast of Wexford, and of Stiguel

Strongbow at Waterford in 1170, and we shall build up an arch of iniquity through which we can picture the generations of Anglo-Norman robbers passing on to eternity, to reap the rewards in that life that such a monument of their erection in this justly entitle them.

We shall take for the two corner-stones of this historic arch the following incidents from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. They are solid enough to bear the superstructure: In 1576, the English governor of the province of Connaught wrote as follows to her *virgin* majesty, Queen Elizabeth:—"At Christmas I headed a military march through the country, and, finding that leniency was of no use, I resolved to destroy everything by fire and sword, sparing neither young nor old. I burnt their crops and houses, and put to the sword every human being that could be found: amongst others we have slain sixty of their most important leaders. Two of those leaders had asked me to spare, if not their own lives, at least those of the common people; but I easily saw that this was but a trick to gain time, and I immediately gave orders to burn or destroy men, cattle, houses, crops, and all. It was done in a storm of rain and hail, which is very convenient weather for such operations, as these people are then more easy to manage." That is one of our corner-stones; here is the other: The successor of Elizabeth, James the First—not Shamus A'——, for he did not come until after Charles the Second went to heaven in 1684. Well, James No. 1 continued the extirpating policy of his predecessor, and in 1607 the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland wrote to the King as follows:—"I have often said and written that famine is the best means of getting rid of the Irish; our swords could never operate with such speed as hunger. I have burned all the country about Lake Neagh; I have killed all the inhabitants, sparing neither sex nor age—not to mention the great number of women and children, horses and cattle, that were burned with the houses." That is our other corner-stone—solid also. And now we shall add on in the construction of our arch some of the other events so firmly embedded in Ireland's history.

Strongbow practised "wiles and treachery" to deceive and cheat the Irish; he took Pope Adrian's bull by the horns, and, with a pardon received from Henry II. in 1171, like a dutiful subject he carried the bull, the pardon, and fire and sword amongst the Irish chieftains. King John came next; he was a son of Henry's, and was *granted* Ireland by his father; he was "cruel and profligate." During the reigns of Henry III.,

Edwards I., II., and III., Richard II., Henry's IV., V., and VI., Edwards IV. and V., and Richard III., a succession of wars and spoliation occurred. Henry VII. came to the throne in 1475, and appointed Sir Edward Poynings Lord-Lieutenant, who had enacted the celebrated "Poynings' Act," which provided that, prior to the holding of any Parliament in Ireland, the Lord-Lieutenant and Privy Council should first certify to the King the causes of assembling such Parliament, and specify such Acts as they deemed requisite to pass.

We now come to the "Defender of the Faith," of blessed memory—the man of eight wives. He set himself up as Protestant Pope, transferred the Abbey lands to laymen, and all the tithes to the Protestants, and placed on the Catholics the support of both churches. He died in 1537, after having sent thousands before him on short notice, who, no doubt, gave him a warm reception if he happened to arrive in their location. Edward VI. ravaged the churches and seized Irishmen's lands, which he gave to English adventurers. His sister, Mary Tudor, who succeeded him, extirpated the clans of Leix and Offalley; her troops massacred the inhabitants. Queen Elizabeth began her despotic sway in 1558. This infamous monster inherited all her father's brutality. She ordered the Catholic religion to be forcibly prohibited in Ireland, the rack to be employed, and directed her officers to torture the *suspected* Irish. Her Deputy of Munster—Carew—carried out the orders so, that, at the conclusion of his government, that province was nearly depopulated. She executed the clergy, slaughtered the people, and beggared the chiefs. James I. succeeded Elizabeth in 1603; his reign in Ireland was remarkable for the re-enactment of the penal laws, the plundering of Ulster chiefs in order to supplant the estates with English and Scotch adventurers. His tool, Sir William Parsons, roasted alive a man named Archer, on a gridiron, to make him swear to suit the Commission on Titles. Charles I. followed in his father's footsteps in bigoted hostility and treachery towards the Catholics. He took one hundred thousand pounds from the Catholic nobility as a price for religious liberty, security of property, for the abolition of private prisons kept by the Protestant clergy, and free pardon for past political offences. He pocketed the money, but broke his word. His head was cut off January 30, 1649. And now came the "curse of Cromwell." This hero (Cromwell) butchered men, women, and children. He massacred the inhabitants of Drogheda in cold blood. The slaughter went on for three days; after which, in a despatch to the Parliament, he



thanked God "for that great mercy." He next massacred three hundred women who had assembled around a cross in Wexford. He left the most ensanguined trail on Irish history.

Charles II. turned up in 1660. He confirmed the Cromwellians in the estates which they plundered from the Irish. An Act was passed in his reign to prevent the importation of Irish cattle into England. James II., of familiar fame, took the throne for a while after Charles died—through, it was said, being poisoned. He offered the Irish Catholics civil and religious liberty to aid him against William of Orange. They doubted him, but nevertheless took up arms in his cause. He was a coward, however, and ended his reign by flight.

William III. was the next king. He violated the treaty of Limerick, which guaranteed religious liberty to the Catholics. He passed a law disabling the Catholics from educating their children, or being guardians of their own or other persons' children; disarming all Catholics, and expelling all Catholic prelates and priests from the kingdom. He killed the Irish linen trade by enactments. By the 7th of William III., no Protestant in Ireland was allowed to instruct any "Papist," and no "Papist" was allowed to be sent out of Ireland to receive instructions. William died in 1701, and was succeeded by his cousin and sister-in-law, Anne Stuart. Queen Anne had the celebrated and abominable penal code passed, by which Catholics could not acquire landed property in fee or by lease for longer than thirty-one years, and even then they could not possess an interest greater than one-third the amount of the rent. If a Catholic child became a Protestant, the parent could not sell his property, but would have to settle an annuity on the conforming child. Catholics could not inherit the estates of Protestant relations. A Catholic could not own a horse of greater value than five pounds. Forty pounds per annum were offered to Catholic priests who became Protestants. By the 8th of Anne no "Papist" was allowed to instruct any other "Papist." By the same Act, fifty pounds reward was offered for all informers against Catholic archbishops and vicars-general. Anne was translated into Paradise A.D. 1714, and then came the first of the Georges. In the sixth year of George I.'s reign, a law was passed declaring that the English Parliament had full power and authority to make laws to bind the people of the kingdom of Ireland, and the Irish House of Lords was deprived of its final jurisdiction in cases of appeal. A law was attempted to be passed by the Irish Parliament inflicting a revoltingly indecent penalty on Catholic

ecclesiastics ; it was so abominable that Sir Robert Walpole, the English Prime Minister, secured its defeat.

George II. began his reign in 1727. A law was passed in the 29th year of George II. that barristers and attorneys were obliged to waive their privilege, and betray their clients, if "Papists," and that "Papists" residing in Ireland should make good to Protestants all losses sustained by the privateers of any Catholic king "ravaging the coasts of Ireland." Then came George III. in 1760. In 1778 the Irish volunteers sprang up, and in 1782 they blew away with their cannon a *portion* of the accursed laws which for nearly 700 years had enslaved the country.

The commercial and constitutional liberty gained for Ireland by the Protestant patriots of '82, and which was enjoyed for the following eighteen years, was to the nation what an oasis in the desert is to the weary traveller. From that year Ireland rose in wealth, in trade, and in manufactures, and in every branch of industry that could render her rich and prosperous. She had won her seat among the nations of the world, and advanced in prosperity and the happiness of her people to an extent unparalleled in the annals of any other country within so short a period. But the jealous eye of her old persecutor was on her. England but waited an opportunity to destroy the rising greatness of the Irish nation. This opportunity she *made* in 1797-8, by brutally goading the people into premature insurrection. William Pitt sent into the country an immense army composed of British and hired German mercenary troops, who were aided by native Orange yeomanry. It is estimated that in those years 137,000 soldiers were in Ireland. A persecution, accompanied with all the circumstances of ferocious cruelty, was begun ; neither age, sex, nor acknowledged innocence could excite pity. The profession of the Catholic faith alone was considered crime enough to justify the infliction of untold torture. Lord Moira, in a speech in the British House of Lords, Nov. 22, 1797, used these words : "I have known a man, in order to extort confession of a supposed crime, or of that of some neighbour, picketed till he actually fainted ; picketed a second time till he fainted again ; and when he came to himself picketed a third time, till he once more fainted, and all this upon mere suspicion." He also says that "men had been taken and hung up till they were half-dead, and afterwards threatened with a repetition of this treatment, unless they made a confession of their imputed guilt." He adds, "These were not particular acts of cruelty, *but formed part of the new system.* Twenty-eight men were brought out and deliberately

murdered by the Orange yeomen and a party of the Antrim militia on May 25, 1798. Thirty-four men were shot without trial at Dunlavin. The tortures familiarly practised by the soldiery and yeomanry against the people were: Whipping, half-hanging, picketing. The hair of some of the victims was cut in the form of a cross on the crowns of their heads, and the hollow thus formed strewn with gunpowder, which was set fire to, and the process repeated till the sufferers fainted. There was also the torture of the pitch-cap, which consisted in applying a cap smeared with hot pitch to the shorn head of "a croppy," and dragging it forcibly off when the pitch hardened. The flesh was thus torn from the victim's head, and blinding was added to his other sufferings, as the melted pitch streamed down his forehead into his eyes. The cabins of the peasantry were burned, their sons tortured or murdered, and their daughters, in many instances, brutally violated by the armed demons.

The following incident will show what a relish the yeomanry had for the work of slaughter they were engaged in:—Hunter Gowan, a yeomanry officer, marched into Gorey, at the head of his Orangemen, with a croppy finger on the point of his sword, and afterwards in a carbusal he and his followers stirred their punch with it. Well, Pitt forced the country into rebellion in May, 1798, and on the 22nd of the next January the union of the Parliaments of Great Britain and Ireland was proposed. Pitt, the British Minister, and Castlereagh, the Irish Chief Secretary, had now brought things to maturity; and the next move—the one all through aimed at, the destruction of the Irish Parliament—was forced through by bribery, fraud, and unparalleled rascality. The new law went into operation January 1, 1801, and with it departed from Ireland happiness, trade, manufacture, and all that could give contentment to a nation. Was it zeal for the Protestant religion, or a hatred of Catholicism, that induced England to rob and torture the Irish people? We think not: Britain had her eye on the plunder to be obtained from the sister Isle, and religion was made a chief pretext to rob her. When the gorgon-face of British cupidity is turned in the direction of any land that she thinks she can with impunity despoil, little does she scruple the means used to attain her end.

In India, England decorated the temples of the Hindoo gods, and provided the dancing girls, to engage the attention of the people while she pilfered their princes. Macaulay says: "She gilded and painted the images of the Hindoo Pantheon, and embellished the car under the wheels of which crazy devotees flung

themselves, to be crushed to death, at every festival. She sent guards of honour to escort pilgrims to places of worship, and actually made oblations at the shrines of idols, in that country where human victims were offered to the Ganges, where the widow was laid on the pile with the corpse of her husband, and burned alive by her own children." In Ireland she set a price on the priest's head, and hunted him like a wolf. She tore down and desecrated the temples of the living God, and tortured and murdered the people for practising the religion of Christ. She legislated the people into ignorance by destroying the schools and teaching. While she offered incense to Buddha, she sought to destroy the religion of the true God. We have now completed the monument of iniquity by these few fragments gathered from her myriad acts of infamy to the Irish race, and no doubt the reader will agree with us that it is a sufficient legacy of hate to nerve each succeeding generation of Irishmen in a continuous struggle to throw off the foul monster that pressed down on the vitality of the Irish nation, absorbing the blood and life of her people.

Here, then, are the sources in the past which, coupled with the injustice and oppression of British rule in Ireland to-day, call forth the undying patriotism of the Irish race the world over, towards their country, and make possible such splendid heroism and sacrifice as have been shown by Ireland's matchless son—**MICHAEL DAVITT.**

---

## CHAPTER I.

### THE GREAT LAND AGITATION—MICHAEL DAVITT AGAIN IN A CONVICT'S GARB—INNISFAIL.

"Far dearer the grave or the prison,  
 Illumed by one patriot name,  
 Than the trophies of all who have risen  
 On Liberty's ruins to fame."—MOORE.

IRELAND, to-day, is in the midst of a great struggle for constitutional freedom. She stands a central figure among the nations, bravely fighting against immense odds, with a powerful, crafty, and merciless oppressor, for the right to give bread and security to her people—to protect them against the extortion and eviction of a class who inherit by primogeniture from alien adventurers the plundered property of the Irish people. She has the sym-

pathy and respect of the world, because she deserves it. Her agitation is based on principles of right and justice, and her people are united and earnest in their demands for measures which the civilisation of the century endorses, and which, had she the right of enacting in a legislature of her own, she would grant to the oppressed millions. How are these demands treated by Ireland's ruler? The Irish prisons yawn to receive the promoters and leaders of constitutional agitation, and they are being rapidly filled up. Thirty thousand troops, fourteen thousand military police, and a hireling magistracy are doing what they can to terrorise the people. Coercion Acts have been passed to destroy the right of individual freedom for two years. Arms Acts have been made additional pretexts for imprisonment. In fine, England is straining every nerve in her strong body to break up this agitation and continue the chapter of the centuries sketched in our introductory remarks.

The Irish National Land League leads and directs the agitation. Its objects are to emancipate six hundred thousand Irish tenant farmers from landlord rapacity and cruelty, by abolishing the law of primogeniture and entail, and creating a peasant proprietary.

Thus far the Land League has achieved undying renown. It averted the awful consequences attendant upon an Irish famine. It saved thousands of lives which inevitably would have been sacrificed but for its timely interference. It came between the landlords and the people when the former were flooding the country with ejectments the year after the famine, and cried, Stop! or we will Boycott you and your lands; and they did stop. Here is the proof. After the great famine of 1846-47, the landlords evicted three hundred thousand families, or one and a half millions of people. In the House of Commons, during the session of 1879, Gladstone, speaking on the Compensation for Disturbance Bill, which, amongst other things, was to restrict ejectments for two years until the effects caused by the famine would have disappeared, and which bill passed the Commons, but was killed in the House of Lords, said, that if the bill did not pass, fifteen thousand individuals would be ejected in 1880 from their homes, without remedy and without hope. Well, even this did not occur. The Land League was more powerful than the Gladstone Ministry. It brought the landlords to time, and saved the people.

From what did this great organisation that has the support of all sections of Irishmen—Extremists, Moderates, and even

Orangemen—spring? We shall discuss that later on, and will here point to the central figure in the executive body, the indefatigable worker and great organiser, MICHAEL DAVITT, of whom James Redpath said, in one of his letters when in Ireland, and while Davitt was in the United States, “When Davitt is in Ireland, he and not Parnell is the real leader of the agitation.” Mr Parnell acknowledges the same. Where to-day is this great leader—this man who was instrumental in saving the lives of thousands of his famine-stricken country-people, who has built up a constitutional agitation never surpassed in any country—a man who gave mild advice, and calmed the passion and desire for revenge of an outraged people—a man who accomplished what the British Cabinet failed in—where? In the garb of an English convict, in the British convict prison of Portland!—in the prison where heretofore he was *tortured* for over seven weary years. Such is ever England’s reward to Irishmen who try to raise up their fellow-countrymen. But Davitt is enshrined in the heart of every man, woman, and child of Irish extraction, and in that of liberty-loving people of other nationalities, who will remember his sufferings in his country’s cause; and, if in the providence of God a day of reckoning for John Bull shall come, it will be added to the already heavy weight of iniquity to be atoned for. God send it soon and sudden!

In beginning a sketch of the life and labours, in Ireland’s cause, of Michael Davitt, we cannot open in a more appropriate manner than by presenting to the reader a bold and fervid poem, written by Mr Davitt while undergoing the horrors of Dartmoor convict prison, some years since, and never heretofore published. This emanation from his heart is as *apropos* to-day as when the lines were written; for heroic Davitt is again “clad in England’s felon garb, and by her vengeance bound.” May the cry of love, loyalty, and daring, from the martyr’s living tomb, breathed through these verses, fan into flame a fire of patriotism in the breasts of tens of thousands of Irish men and women, and be productive of as many sacrifices on the altar of Irish liberty:—

#### INNISFAIL.

In England’s felon garb we’re clad,  
And by her vengeance bound;  
Her concentrated hate we’ve had—  
Her *justice*, never found..  
Her laws, accurs’d, have done their worst,—  
In vain they still assail  
To crush the hearts that beat for thee,  
Our own loved Innisfail.



Nor can the dungeon's deepest gloom,  
 But make us love thee more ;  
 We'd brave the terrors of the tomb  
 To keep the oath we swore :  
 In chains, or free, to live for thee,  
 And never once to quail  
 Before the foe that wrought such woe  
 To thee, loved Innisfail.

From Irish mothers' hearts has flowed  
 This sacred love of thee ;  
 And Erin's daughters' cheeks have glowed  
 That love in deeds to see.  
 All cowards born their bright lips scorn,  
 Whilst joyously they hail  
 The hearts that beat for love of thee,  
 Our own loved Innisfail.

Then let our jailers scorn and roar  
 When cheerful looks we wear ;  
 The Patriot's God whom we adore  
 Will shield us from despair.  
 Fair bosoms rise with love-drawn sighs  
 By mountain, stream, and vale,  
 And day and night in prayers unite  
 For us, and Innisfail.

Here, chained beneath the tyrant's hand,  
 By martyr's blood we swear !  
 To Freedom and to Fatherland  
 We still allegiance bear ;  
 Nor felon's fate, nor England's hate,  
 Nor hellish-fashioned jail,  
 Shall stay this hand to wield a brand  
 One day for Innisfail !

---

## CHAPTER II.

### MICHAEL DAVITT—HIS EARLY LIFE—EVICTION FROM HIS FARM HOME IN MAYO—EMIGRATION.

"Like the bright lamp that shone in Kildare's holy fane,  
 And burned through long ages of darkness and storm,  
 Is the heart that sorrows have frowned on in vain,  
 Whose spirit outlives them, unfading and warm.  
 Erin ! oh Erin ! thus bright, through the tears  
 Of a long night of bondage, thy spirit appears."—MOORE.

THE story of the life of Michael Davitt is one of unostentatious devotion to the cause of his country and his fellow-men, and is

withal a life of sacrifice and purity. He was born in 1846, of respected parents of the farming class, residing near Straide, County Mayo. The year was one of trial and intense suffering to the Irish people; but, as the adage says, "Out of evil cometh good," so, out of that black famine year of evil, came good to the people in the birth of a strong champion and fearless advocate of the same class that was then dying of hunger on the roads' side, who was destined to overturn the system that produced the famine horrors which surrounded his birth. At the age of four years, the little home in which he first saw the light was torn down over his head, by that ruthless institution which has played so prominent a part in Ireland's history—the Crowbar Brigade, the executive of the landlord's will; and he, with his parents and family, were thrown upon the road-side to live or die, as they might for all the reigning power cared. But they didn't die, unluckily for Irish landlordism; and the evicted child lived to return to the site of his desecrated home, and, in the presence of fifteen thousand persons at one of the great land meetings, denounce the law and blasphemy that allowed such deeds to be perpetrated. The recollection of this crime has had its effect upon Davitt's life; for, on the occasion referred to, February 1, 1880, standing upon a platform erected over the ruins of his family's homestead, he said:—

"Does not the scene of domestic devastation now spread before this vast meeting bear testimony to the crimes with which landlordism stands charged before God and man to-day? Can a more eloquent denunciation of an accursed land-code be found than what is witnessed here in this depopulated district? In the memory of many now listening to my words, that peaceful little stream which meanders by the outskirts of this multitude sang back the merry voices of happy children, and wended its way through a once populous and prosperous village. Now, however, the merry sounds are gone, the busy hum of hamlet life is hushed in sad desolation; for the hands of the house destroyers have been here and performed their hellish work, leaving Straide but a name to mark the place where happy homesteads once stood, and whence an inoffensive people were driven to the four corners of the earth by the ruthless decree of Irish landlordism. How often, in a strange land, has my boyhood's ear drunk in the tale of outrage and wrong and infamy perpetrated here in the name of law and in the interest of territorial greed; in listening to the accounts of famine and

sorrow, of deaths through landlordism, of coffinless graves, of scenes—

“ On highway side, where oft was seen  
The wild dog and the vulture keen  
Tug for the limbs and gnaw the face  
Of some starved child of our Irish race.”

“ What wonder that such laws should become hateful, and, when felt by personal experience of the tyranny and injustice, that a life of irreconcilable enmity to them should follow, and that, *standing here on the spot where I first drew breath*, in sight of a levelled home, with memories of privation and tortures crowding upon my mind, I should swear to devote the remainder of that life to the destruction of what has blasted my early years, pursued me with its vengeance through manhood, and leaves my family in exile to-day, far from that Ireland which is itself wronged, robbed, and humiliated through the agency of the same accursed system. It is no little consolation to know, however, that we are here to-day doing battle against a doomed monopoly; and that the power which has so long domineered over Ireland and its people is brought to its knees at last, and on the point of being crushed forever; and, if I am standing to-day upon a platform erected over the ruins of my levelled home, I may yet have the satisfaction of trampling on the ruins of Irish landlordism.”

After the eviction, the Davitt family left Ireland, a portion coming to America, but the parents going to England. In the factory town of Haslingden, near Manchester, in Lancashire, young Davitt grew up, and, like most children of such surroundings, he was early serving a master in one of the factories. Here he learned the sufferings of the factory slave, and suffered a mishap, which caused the loss of his right arm; that limb having been caught in the machinery and crushed, it had to be amputated at the shoulder. For five years afterwards he attended the Wesleyan school in Haslingden, and when 15 years old, got employment as assistant letter-carrier, and book-keeper, in the printing-office attached to the post-office there. In 1868 he became a commercial traveller, dealing extensively in fire-arms. This brought him into contact with a gunsmith named John Wilson, from Birmingham, with whom he was afterwards tried.

During the time of the Murphy anti-Catholic riots, when that firebrand worked up the English fanatics to attack Catholic

churches in Lancashire, Davitt showed the temper of the metal that was in him. He organised a band of young men of Irish parentage to protect the churches that were to be attacked. On one occasion, he and another young man, with revolvers in their hands, routed a large party of those fanatics, who were about attacking a Catholic church in Haslingden, by firing over their heads. The mob thought that Davitt and his companion were but the advance-guard of a large party, and fled for their lives; by the intrepid stand of these two young Irishmen—for there were only the two defenders present—the church was saved.

Whenever it became known that any of the Catholic churches in Rochdale, Bacup, Haslingden, or in any of the adjoining Lancashire towns, were to be attacked by the fanatical mobs, there Michael Davitt and his faithful and gallant band were to be found, ready to prevent the desecration of the House of God, or die in the attempt. He rendered great service, and prevented the destruction of many a temple erected by the religious fervour of Irish Catholics in England. A strange event occurred some years afterwards in this, at that time, hot-bed of bigotry. When Davitt was released from prison, in 1877, after having suffered seven years and seven months of untold agony, he visited those very towns in Lancashire, and was everywhere received by the same people with a perfect ovation. They turned out without regard to creed or party to receive him, and by public manifestations recognised and approved the great patriotism and sacrifices rendered to his country by their once uncompromising foe.

The English atmosphere which surrounded him—owing to his patriotic parents and his association with the Irish exiles, who form a large portion of the north of England population—the victims, like himself, of landlordism—did not affect his love for his native land, and we find him at the inception of the Fenian movement an active, but, as ever, an unpretending apostle of the new hope for Ireland. He soon gathered round him some of the staunchest stuff which that organisation brought out, and made the north of England the very bulwark of the Irish cause. Davitt went into the movement with all the sincerity of a man who felt that a great wrong had been and was being done his country, and that it was his duty to do all that he could to overthrow that wrong; and it was not due to such men as Michael Davitt that more in that direction was not accomplished. When the call came from Ireland for men in '67, Davitt was one of the first to respond, and was not the least disheartened at the failure, as was shown by his willingness to obey a second call in leading

a portion of a detachment of the 2000 North of England men who had gathered to attack Chester Castle. When those above him countermanded their orders, Davitt led his men back to their homes, disposing of his personal valuables to aid his less fortunate comrades.

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## CHAPTER III.

### DAVITT AS A LITERARY MAN—HIS ARREST, TRIAL, AND PRISON SUFFERINGS.

“O God! why should so brave a man  
His noble life thus yield?  
A patriot would rather die  
Upon the battle-field.  
But England's judges doomed the man—  
Alas! that it should be;  
Let others emulate him still,  
And Ireland will be free.”

As a literary man, Michael Davitt stands high. He is a man of educated thought, and wide and varied reading. Among his many accomplishments is a knowledge of the Irish, French, and Italian languages, whilst the purest English is to be found in his public utterances.

In the re-organisation of the Irish movement, which followed the attempt on Chester Castle, and while the British Government were doing to death the martyrs—Allen, Larkin, and O'Brien—Davitt threw into the movement his whole heart and soul, and worked with grim energy to repair the breaches made in the Irish national ranks, selecting the most dangerous work of arming the people. While thus engaged, he was arrested in London on May 14, 1870, with a gunsmith named John Wilson, from Birmingham; the latter being in no way associated with the revolutionary movement, and not being supposed to know the uses intended for the arms which he sold. The following particulars of his trial at Newgate are gleaned from the London Central Criminal Court Petty Sessions papers:—

He was indicted for feloniously conspiring to depose the Queen, and to levy war against her. The Attorney-General, the Solicitor-General, Mr Cole, Mr Poland, and Mr Archibald conducted the prosecution. The first witness, Detective Seal, of Birmingham, deposed to the despatch (under Wilson's super-

vision) from Birmingham to Leeds of a box containing nineteen muzzle-loading rifles, nineteen bayonets, and a Snider breech-loader; also, a cask addressed to Glasgow, which contained thirty-six large-chamber revolvers, with packages of cartridges. A few days later, Detective Seal swore he saw Wilson and Davitt together, and watched them despatch three boxes to Newcastle-on-Tyne. These boxes were ultimately opened, and were found to contain revolvers and ammunition. The case occupied a considerable time, as it was necessary in each instance to prove that the consignment of arms had been sent either by Davitt or by Wilson; to prove its despatch, its delivery, and its contents; that there was no genuine business invoice, and no genuine consignee in any way connected with it; and to prove, from a variety of small circumstances, that Wilson and Davitt were acting in concert. An important witness, after Detective Seal, was John Bodley, head constable of the Irish Constabulary, who gave evidence as to the opening of a case containing ten rifles, six revolvers, five sword bayonets, three bayonets, and three turn-screws. The arms were all fit for use, but were not finished, as they would have been had they been intended for sale. Superintendent Dixon, of the Newcastle police, proved that he impounded three cases, each containing twenty-five revolvers. Detective Henderson, of Manchester, gave evidence as to a box which contained 11,000 rounds of revolver cartridges and 400 rounds for Snider rifles; that the weapons were not in a finished state, and could not have been intended for sale, as no gunmaker would have shown them in his window; that they were despatched in fictitious names, and were addressed to fictitious consignees; in each case they were ultimately traced back to the possession of Wilson and Davitt.

The principal event in the course of the trial was the examination of the infamous informer, John Joseph Corydon. "I was at one time," he swore, "an officer in the Federal Army in America. I left it in 1856. I became a member of the Fenian Confederation in 1862. I remained so till 1865. An organisation of the Fenian conspiracy existed in New York, and in several parts of America. Meetings were held at which I was present. The object of the conspiracy was to overthrow Her Majesty's Government in Ireland, and establish an Irish Republic. An oath was administered to the members. I took it. It was to be faithful to the Fenian organisation, and to take up arms when required for the establishment of the Republic in Ireland. The organisation was very extensive in America. The head-



quarters were in New York, and there were branches at different cities throughout the United States, with State centres at the head of them. I was sent to Ireland in 1865 by John O'Mahony. He was then the head of the Fenian organisation in America. The Fenian organisation existed at that time in Ireland. The head-centre of all—Stephens—was in Dublin. The organisation was ready to fight at any time if he gave the word. We had frequent meetings at Liverpool. Money was collected at these to buy arms. Arms were procured at Leeds, Birmingham, and all the manufacturing towns in England. I know Colonel Burke. It was his function to buy arms. A great quantity were bought. In February, 1867, an attempt was made to seize the arms in Chester Castle. The mail train from London to Holyhead was to be seized as it was passing Chester. The telegraph wires were to be torn down. The rails were to be taken up. The arms taken at Chester Castle were to be put in the train and taken to Holyhead, where the mail boat was to be seized and taken to some port in Ireland. That port was not Dublin. I gave information, and the enterprise was disconcerted. It was arranged that as many as 1200 or 1400 Fenians were to surprise Chester Castle. I did not myself go to Chester. I only went as far as Birkenhead. I saw as many as 600 going from the Liverpool district. After the attempt on Chester Castle, Fenian meetings were held every day in Mullan's house. These meetings consisted entirely of Fenians. M'Afferty and Flood were there. Captain Deasy and several others were present. They were mostly American officers. The subject of discussion at these meetings was the loss of not having taken Chester Castle, and the making of arrangements for the rising of the 5th of March in Ireland. Davitt was there the whole time."

Corydon's evidence regarding meeting Davitt before was as false as his dark heart was vile. Michael Davitt solemnly declared that he never saw the wretch until the latter came to the prison to identify him whilst awaiting trial. On that occasion, the following contemptible dodge was resorted to by the prison officials, in order that the informer might be enabled to identify and swear away the liberty of the prisoner:—Corydon and others being in the prison corridor, Davitt was ordered to come out of his cell and go into another. Of course the informer saw him when doing so, and was told it was Davitt. He then came to the cell and identified the prisoner. When Davitt saw Corydon, he at once recognised an informer, and said to him: "So you are one of the reptiles that had to fly from Ireland to

save your life." Corydon replied, with a devilish leer, "You will find that I will live long enough to settle you." And so he did; for it was mainly on the evidence of the perjured rascal that Davitt was found guilty and sentenced to fifteen years' penal servitude.

During the trial, the following evidence of Davitt's nobleness of nature showed itself:—He made a feeling appeal to the Judge in behalf of Wilson, who was a man with a wife and family. He said Wilson was totally unconnected in any manner with the Irish movement; "that he was entirely innocent of the charge on which he was indicted; and that he (Davitt) would willingly take the sentence intended for the Englishman, in addition to his own." For this generous act, he was complimented by the Court, and was told that the matter would be considered. Wilson was subsequently sentenced to the lighter term of seven years' and Davitt to fifteen years' penal servitude; seven years and seven months of which he served in different British bastiles.

The terrible sufferings endured in those weary years were afterwards told by Michael Davitt, in a pamphlet which he published soon after his release on ticket-of-leave, December 19, 1877. The record is a heart-breaking one, and proves what an overmastering devotion Mr Davitt must have had to his native land, when even the recollection of his frightful sufferings, and the possibility—which has since happened—of his being re-arrested and sent back to the horrors of a convict prison, by the cancellation of his ticket-of-leave, never prevented him for one moment from labouring for the emancipation of those of his fellow-countrymen who are victims to a cruel, unjust system of land tenure. We shall let him, in his own words, give the heart-rending recital. He says:—

"When arrested in London on the 14th of May, 1870, I was taken to the Paddington Police Station, and underwent the customary questioning, searching, and other preliminaries to a 'lodgings in a lock-up.' From Saturday night until Monday morning, I was confined in an almost darkened cell, in which was a water-closet with its inseparable offensiveness. I was allowed neither bed nor bedding, and had consequently no sleep during the time I remained in the station, from Saturday till Monday. I was allowed but a little light only when eating my meals. On my arrival in Clerkenwell House of Detention, after the examination before the Marylebone Police Court magistrate, I was immediately stripped naked, and compelled to undergo the

indignity of being searched in a manner almost too disgusting to describe. Each article of dress was minutely examined by one warder; while another was employed in watching, lest I should resent the insult to which I was subjected in being made to stand naked in presence of the two warders; one of whom was coolly satisfying himself that I had nothing concealed upon my person. After each of the five or six examinations I underwent before the magistrates, previous to being committed for trial, I had to submit to the same searching, in the state of nudity I have described, on arriving in the House of Detention.

"The first time the Governor visited me in my cell, he inquired what I was arrested for; and on my answering that I was taken on suspicion of being a Fenian, he replied, 'I don't care what you are; you must clean those traps [pointing to water-closet taps and other utensils in the cell] while you remain here;' and during my confinement there I was compelled to do so, as also to clean my cell floor and windows. I was only allowed one hour each day for exercise, and, of course, not permitted to speak to anyone. There were none but religious books allowed me during my stay in that prison. The bedding was the worst and scantiest I have seen during my whole imprisonment, being nothing but a dirty blanket and rug, and a bare, unmattressed hammock. Having paid for my own keep while awaiting my trial, I cannot speak as to the quantity or quality of the food supplied to prisoners in Clerkenwell.

"When the informer Corydon was brought to identify me, I was taken from the cell in which I was located, and marched along the ward in sight of the informer and detectives who accompanied him, and placed in a cell for identification. The informer was then supposed to look through the inspection hole of each cell in the ward to find me; and after being permitted to see me taken out of one cell and put into another, it was not a very brilliant achievement, even for John Joseph Corydon, to find me in the cell he saw me enter. In addition to this, I may be pardoned for detailing another incident that occurred, and which I believe contributed not a little to my conviction. A few days previous to being committed for trial, I drew up instructions for my solicitor as to the mode of my defence; and this I had done in exact accordance with the rules suspended in my cell, which rules also specified that such instructions could be handed by prisoners to their legal advisers, without previous inspection by the Governor or other prison officials. When my solicitor's clerk visited me for the purpose of receiving those in-

structions, I handed him the envelope containing them, in the presence of the warder who presided at the interview, and who had brought me from my cell to the visitors' or solicitor's room. Two days afterwards, I was again visited by my solicitors' clerk, and astounded to hear that the Governor had demanded my letter after the previous visit, as the officer had reported that he saw me draw a plan of the prison upon a piece of paper and give the same to the clerk! When I saw the Governor on the following morning, I demanded an explanation of this strange proceeding, and had to remain satisfied with being told that it was the officer's fault, and that if I had no objection to his (the Governor's) reading my letter, it would be given to my solicitor. I replied that I had not the least objection, owing to what the officer had reported; but that I protested against the whole proceeding as unfair, and directly opposed to the rules hung up in my cell. Now mark what transpired within those two days. A sensational paragraph had appeared in one of the London dailies, announcing that another plot had been discovered to blow up the House of Detention, and that on this occasion it would be attempted from within the prison. It is unnecessary to say what effect this would have upon the public mind, and how small the chance would be of my obtaining an unprejudiced jury and an impartial trial in London after this. Two great points had, by this heartless canard, been made against me; the plan of my defence had been discovered, and the public feeling directed adversely towards me, owing to the report that I had intended to effect another explosion."

Mr Davitt was then removed to Newgate, where his treatment was not so severe, he says, as it had been in Clerkenwell. His first experience of the horrors of penal servitude he thus describes:—

"My trial commenced on the 5th of July, and at six o'clock in the evening of the 18th I was sentenced to fifteen years' penal servitude, and poor Wilson to seven. Immediately after sentence I was deprived of my clothes and put in convict uniform; my hair and beard being cut close at the same time. I remained in Newgate but eleven days after receiving my sentence, and in that short period I was being initiated into the reality of penal servitude..

"My work, however, was not very heavy, nor otherwise disagreeable; but the classification with thieves had already commenced, and the prospect of spending perhaps fifteen years in

such company made Newgate then appear—what in comparison with other prisons it is not—a veritable Inferno.

“On the 29th of July I was removed to Millbank, and saw Wilson for the last time on that day. If my prayers could have spared him the sufferings he has since undergone, I would have left Newgate with a much lighter heart. Chains were fastened round my ankles in such a manner that I could only stride some twelve or fifteen inches when walking; and, to ensure my offering no resistance, I was compelled to hold the end of the chain with which my feet were bound. Thus dressed and manacled, and guarded by a couple of warders, I was driven from Newgate, along the Thames Embankment, to Millbank Penitentiary. Not quite three months had yet elapsed since I had walked that promenade free and unfettered, without any foreboding of what fate had in store for me; and now I was only allowed, by the necessity of my removal from one prison to another, to look upon that scene for a few moments, and imprint upon my memory the liberty it portrayed, and the life from which I was to be debarred for years. To leave the broad and cheerful light of day, and be immured in a solitary cell—to exchange the social amenities of life, home, country, and friends, for an existence undreamt of by those who know not what a world of suffering is comprised in the meaning of the words ‘solitary confinement’—is a feeling impossible to be expressed in words. John Mitchel has attempted to record his own sensations when, after sentence for treason-felony, he found himself in ‘solitary’ for the first time:—

“‘It came at last; my door was shut, and for the first time I was quite alone. And now I do confess that I flung myself upon my bed and broke into a raging passion of tears—tears bitter and salt, but not of base lamentation for my own fate. The thoughts and feelings that have so shaken me for this once, language was never made to describe.’

“This is the testimony of one whose proud soul had never acknowledged its susceptibility to the common weakness of humanity; but solitary confinement wrung tears from Mitchel. The vagrant sunbeam that finds its way to the lonely occupant of a prison cell but speaks of the liberty which others enjoy, of the happiness that falls to the lot of those whom misfortune has not dragged from the pleasures of life. The cries, the noise, and uproar of London which penetrate the silent corridors, and re-echo in the cheerless cells of Millbank, are so many mocking voices that come to laugh at the misery their walls enclose, and

arouse the recollection of happier days to probe the wounds of present sorrow. And if, despite all this, a prisoner should try to raise himself above those depressing influences, and cheat despair of its prey, he will then experience how far man can go in his inhumanity to man, by finding himself denied the only consolation left him in his utter loneliness—the solace of solacing himself. He will find men who will watch for a smile, or some other sign of a happy obliviousness, and then, by some of the many arts practised for the purpose, end the momentary forgetfulness of imprisonment by an exercise of the almost uncontrolled power they wield over their unfortunate charges.”

Speaking of his life in Millbank, Mr Davitt says:—

“To relate every incident of my ten months’ incarceration in Millbank Penitentiary would only be a tedious repetition of each day’s experience, so uniform is the system of punishment in that prison.

“A description of the cells, together with an account of the daily routine and work that had to be done, will suffice to form some idea of what punishment has to be borne in what is termed ‘probation class.’ The cells are some nine or ten feet long, by about eight wide. Stone floor, bare, whitewashed walls, with neither table nor stool, and, of course, with no fire to warm, by its cheerful glow, the oppressing chilliness of such a place. My bedstead was made of three planks, laid parallel to each other at the end of the cell, and raised from the stone floor but three inches at the foot, and six at the head, of this truly low couch. The only seat allowed me was a bucket, which contained the water supplied me for washing purposes—this bucket having a cover, so as to answer the double purpose of water-holder and stool. The height of this sole article of furniture allowed me was fourteen inches exactly, including the lid, and on this ‘repentance stool’ I was compelled to sit at work ten hours at least, each day, for ten months.

“The punishment this entails upon a tall man can be easily conceived. The recumbent posture and bent chest necessary while picking oakum, with nothing to lean one’s back against to obtain a momentary relief, is distressing in the extreme. The effect upon me, in addition to inducing a weakness in my chest, was singular, but not surprising.

“On entering Millbank, my height was exactly six feet, as measured by the prison standard for that purpose; but on my departure for Dartmoor, ten months after, I had illustrated the

saying that some people can grow downwards, for I then measured but five feet ten and a half inches.

"The bedding supplied was miserably insufficient during the winter months; and owing to this, and the sitting posture during the day, with feet resting upon cold flags, with no fire, and with a prohibition against walking in the cell, many prisoners have lost the use of their limbs from the effects of a Millbank winter. But one hour's exercise in the prison yard was allowed each day, and that was forfeited if the weather proved unfavourable. Owing to my health beginning to break down, I was permitted an extra half-hour's exercise after I had been eight months in the prison. This was granted by the doctor's order.

"I had to rise at six each morning, fold up my bed very neatly, and afterwards wash and scrub my cell floor quite clean with brush and stone used for that purpose. This washing and scrubbing was, I need scarcely remark, very distressing upon me, owing to my physical infirmity; but I was compelled to do it, nevertheless, once each day during the whole term of my imprisonment. After cells were cleaned in the manner I have described, work was then commenced, and continued until a quarter to nine at night; allowing, of course, for meals, exercise, and prayers in chapel each morning.

"The work I was put to in this prison was coir and oakum picking. I was not tasked; but I had to sit working all day, and pick a reasonable share of my coir or oakum, as the case might be. When I inquired, on being first ordered to this sort of work, how I could possibly do it with but a limited number of fingers at my disposal, I was told by the warder that he had known several 'blokes' with but one hand who had managed to pick oakum very well with their teeth. As I declined to use my teeth to tear old ropes to pieces, I had to do the work as best I could.

"During the whole of my stay in Millbank, my conversation with prisoners—at the risk of being punished, of course—as also with warders and chaplains, would not occupy me twenty minutes to repeat, could I collect all the scattered words spoken by me in the whole of that ten months.

"I recollect many weeks going by without my exchanging a word with a single human being.

"The food allowed me for daily rations was as follows:—Breakfast, eight ounces of bread, and three-quarters of a pint of cocoa. Dinner, four ounces of meat (including bone), four days

a week, with six ounces of bread and a pound of potatoes; one day in the week I was allowed a pint of shin-of-beef soup in lieu of meat, and on another one pound of suet pudding, ditto. Dinner on Sunday was twelve ounces of bread, four ounces of cheese, and a pint of water. And for supper each night I received six ounces of bread and a pint of 'skilly,' containing—or rather supposed to contain—two ounces of oatmeal.

"This was the ordinary prison allowance.

"After subsisting for three months on this diet, I applied to the doctor for a little more food, on the ground that I was losing weight, owing to the insufficiency of the quantity allowed; but my application was of no avail.

"The books supplied me while in Millbank were almost exclusively religious, and but one library book was allowed to each prisoner in a fortnight.

"I asked to have mine changed once a week, but was promptly told I could not be favoured beyond other prisoners. The class of books supplied to the Catholic prisoners was such as would be suitable to children, or people ignorant of the truths of the Catholic faith.

"I had often no book to read but one that might answer the requirements of a child; such as the history of 'Naughty Fanny,' or 'Grandmother Betty,' and like productions, which, though doubtless good in their way, were not what could lessen the dreary monotony of such an existence.

"A circumstance in connection with the situation of Millbank may (taken with what I have already said on that prison) give some faint idea of what confinement there really means. Westminster Tower clock is not far distant from the penitentiary, so that its every stroke is as distinctly heard in each cell as if it were situated in one of the prison yards. At each quarter of an hour, day and night, it chimes a bar of the 'Old Hundredth,' and those solemn tones strike on the ears of the lonely listeners like the voice of some monster singing the funeral dirge of time.

"Often in the lonely watches of the night has it reminded me of the number of strokes I was doomed to listen to, and of how slowly those minutes were creeping along! The weird chant of Westminster clock will ever haunt my memory, and recall that period of my imprisonment when I first had to implore Divine Providence to preserve my reason and save me from the madness which seemed inevitable, through mental and corporeal tortures combined.

"That human reason should give way under such adverse



influences is not, I think, to be wondered at; and many a still living wreck of manhood can refer to the silent system of Millbank and its pernicious surroundings as the cause of his debilitated mind.

"It was here that Edward Duffy died, and where Richard Burke and Martin Hanly Carey were for a time oblivious of their sufferings from temporary insanity, and where Daniel Reddin was paralysed. It was here where Thomas Ahern first showed symptoms of madness, and was put in dark cells and strait-jacket for a 'test' as to the reality of these symptoms. Ten years have passed their long and silent courses since then; but that same Thomas Ahern is still a prisoner, and his mind is still tottering on the brink of insanity. I have anxiously watched him drifting towards this fate for the past six years, unable to render him any assistance, and I can predict that if he is not soon liberated he will exchange Dartmoor for Broadmoor Lunatic Prison, like so many other victims of penal servitude."

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## CHAPTER IV.

### FROM MILLBANK TO DARTMOOR—SIX YEARS AND SIX MONTHS OF AGONY.

"O, men, who have passed through the furnace,  
 Assayed like the gold, and as pure!  
 By your strength can the weakest gain firmness,  
 The strongest may learn to endure;  
 When once they have chosen their part,  
 Though the sword may drive home to each heart."—ANON.

"If the whole of the three kingdoms were searched through for the purpose of discovering a place whereon to erect a prison, with the view of utilising the rigours of a severe climate, damp fogs, more than average rainfall, and a lengthened winter season, with all that was desolate and uninviting in the aspect of nature to assist in the punishment of prisoners, no more suitable place than Dartmoor could be found if a Procrustean spirit guided the search. Buried in the midst of barren and boulder-strewn Devonshire moors, it is peculiarly adapted for an abode of misery. It was here where the French and American prisoners of war were incarcerated during the wars with the first Napoleon and rebel

America, and many a gallant foe of England's there sank beneath the hardships of the climate and the treatment he received.

"The chivalrous Lord Dundonald denounced the Government of the day, in the strongest terms, for confining brave and honourable enemies in such a place; 'enveloped,' as he declared from observation, 'in almost perpetual fog.' Well, governments were no more indifferent in those days to the inhuman treatment of their fallen foes than in more modern, and I shall say more humane (?) times; but now, as then, there are a few generous-hearted Englishmen to be found courageous enough to say they do not glory in this, the shame of England; and that, whether cannons are charged with foes in India, enemies tied to trees and fired at for practice in Jamaica, or the youth of Ireland done to death by penal servitude in England's prisons, it is a disgrace to any country boasting of its civilisation, and repugnant to the generous instincts of humanity.

"It would be impossible for me, in the limited time at my disposal, to detail every circumstance connected with my six years and six months' confinement in Dartmoor: I can, therefore, only dwell upon the most prominent incidents connected with my treatment during that period, by a simple statement of facts as to what that treatment was.

"For the first week after my arrival from Millbank I was located in the penal cells, and had to make application for removal from same into some other part of the prison. The penal cells, or rather some of them, are much preferable to the ordinary or iron cells, being somewhat larger and much better ventilated; but owing to their being constructed and set apart for incorrigible prisoners—men who are taught obedience by means of starvation, and consequently maddened by hunger and cold—it is almost impossible to obtain any sleep in such a place. I will have more to say anent these cells by and by, as I was confined in them from August, '76, until November, '77. The iron or ordinary cell I was next located in, and remained an inmate of for close on five years, I will now describe. So much attention having been directed to these veritable iron cages by the exposure of poor M'Carthy's treatment, and his confinement in such cells, I purpose giving an accurate description of them, and removing any doubts, if such exist, as to the account already given of their size, construction, and ventilation. The dimensions of one of them will answer for that of the whole, as they are uniform in almost every respect. Length, seven feet exactly; width, four feet; and height, seven feet one or two inches. The sides (or frames)

of all are of corrugated iron, and the floor is a slate one. These cells are ranged in tiers or wards in the centre of a hall, the tiers being one above another, to the height of four wards; the floors of the three upper tiers of cells forming the ceilings or tops of those immediately beneath them. Each ward or tier contains in length forty-two cells, giving a total of one hundred and sixty-eight for one hall. The sole provision made for ventilating these cells is an opening of two and a half or three inches left at the bottom of each door. There is no opening into the external air from any of those cells in Dartmoor; and the air admitted into the hall has to traverse the width of the same to enter the hole under the cell doors. In the cells on the first three tiers, or wards, there are about a dozen small perforations in the corner of each, for the escape of vitiated air; but in those on the top or fourth ward—or, speaking more confidently, in those on that ward in which I was located a portion of my time—there were no such perforations—no possible way of escape for foul air except where most of it entered as ‘pure’—under the cell door. In the heat of summer it was almost impossible to breathe in these top cells; so close and foul would the air become from the improper ventilation of the cells below, allowing the breathed air in each cell to mix with that in the hall, and thus ascend to the top.

“I, on one occasion, begged the Governor of Dartmoor to remove me from such a situation, for the additional reason to those I have given that I had not sufficient light to read in the cell I was in; but I begged in vain. I was, however, soon after removed to a lower tier, after foul eruptions began to break out upon my body through the impure air I had been breathing. It has been since denied by Chatham prison officials that Charles M’Carthy ever slept with his bed across the inside of his cell door in order to catch sufficient air to breathe. From my own experience, I can fully believe the necessity of his doing so, as it was quite common in Dartmoor for prisoners to sleep with their heads towards the door for a similar reason; and I have often, in the summer season, done this myself, and had, repeatedly, to go on my knees and put my mouth to the bottom of the door for a little air.

“The light admitted to these ordinary iron cells is scarcely sufficient to read by in the daytime; and, should a fog prevail, it would be impossible to read in half of them. The cells are fitted with a couple of plates of thick, intransparent glass, about eighteen inches long by six inches wide each, and the light is transmitted through this ‘window’ from the hall and not from

the extern of the prison. I have often laid the length of my body on the cell floor, and placed my book under the door to catch sufficient light to read it.

"The food in Dartmoor prison I found to be the very worst in quality and the filthiest in cooking of any of the other places I had been in. The quantity of daily rations was the same as in Millbank, with the difference of four ounces of bread more each day and one of meat less in the week. The quality, as I have already remarked, is inferior to that of any other prison: but from about November till May it is simply execrable; the potatoes being often unfit to eat, and rotten cow-carrots occasionally substituted for other food. To find black beetles in soup, 'skilly,' bread, and tea, was quite a common occurrence; and some idea can be formed of how hunger will reconcile a man to look without disgust upon the most filthy objects in nature, when I state, as a fact, that I have often discovered beetles in my food and have eaten it after throwing them aside, without experiencing much revulsion of feeling at the sight of such loathsome animals in my victuals. Still I have often came in from work, weak with fatigue and hunger, and found it impossible to eat the putrid meat or stinking soup supplied me for dinner, and had to return to labour again after 'dining' on six ounces of bad bread.

"It was quite a common occurrence in Dartmoor for men to be reported and punished for eating candles, boot oil, and other repulsive articles; and, notwithstanding that a highly offensive smell is purposely given to prison candles to prevent their being eaten instead of burned, men are driven, by a system of half-starvation, into an animal-like voracity, and anything that a dog would eat is nowise repugnant to their taste. I have seen men eat old poultices found buried in heaps of rubbish I was assisting in carting away, and have seen bits of candle pulled out of the prison cesspool and eaten after the human soil was wiped off them!

"The labour I was first put to was stone-breaking, that being considered suitable work for non-able-bodied prisoners. I was put to this employment in a large shed, along with some eighty or ninety more prisoners; but, my hand becoming blistered by the action of the hammer after I had broken stones for a week, I was unable to continue at that work, and was consequently put to what is termed 'cart labour.' This sort of work is very general in Dartmoor, and I may as well give some description of it.

"Eight men constitute a 'cart party,' and have an officer over them, armed with a staff, if working within the prison walls, and with a rifle and accompanied by an armed guard, if employed outside. Each man in the cart party is supplied with a collar, which is put over the head and passes from the right or left shoulder under the opposite arm, and is then hooked to the chain by means of which the cart is drawn about. The cart party to which I was attached was employed in carting stones, coals, manure, and rubbish of all descriptions. In drawing the cart along, each prisoner has to bend forward and pull with all his strength, or the warder who is driving will threaten to 'run him in,' or report him for idleness. It was our work to supply all parts of the prison—workshops, officers' mess-room, cook-house, etc.—with coals; and I was often drawing these about in rain and sleet, with no fire to warm or dry myself after a wetting. I was only a few months at this sort of work, as I met with a slight accident by a collar hurting the remnant of my right arm, and was in consequence of this excused from cart labour by the doctor's order. I was again set to breaking granite, and remained at that job during the winter of 1870-71.

"I may remark that in June, when I was first put to stone-breaking, I was employed in a shed; but during the winter I was compelled to work outside, in the cold and damp, foggy weather. I was left at this work until spring, and was then removed to a task from the effects of which I believe I will never completely recover. My health on entering prison was excellent, never having had any sickness at any previous period of my life. The close confinement and insufficient food in Millbank had told, of course, on my constitution, though not to any very alarming extent; but the task I was now put to laid the germs of the heart and lung disease I have since been suffering from. This task was putrid bone-breaking.

"On the brink of the prison cesspool, in which all the soil of the whole establishment is accumulated for manure, stands a small building, some twenty feet long by about ten broad, known as the 'bone-shed.' The floor of this shed is sunk some three feet lower than the ground outside, and is on a level with the pool which laves the wall of the building. All the bones accruing from the meat supply of the prison were pounded into dust in this shed, and during the summer of 1872 (excepting five weeks spent in Portsmouth prison), this was my employment. These bones have often lain putrifying for weeks in the broiling heat of the summer sun, ere they were brought in to be broken.

The stench arising from their decomposition, together with the noxious exhalations from the action of the sun's rays on the cesspool outside, no words could adequately express: it was a veritable charnel-house. It will be noted that I was at work outside the previous winter, and when the bright days and summer season came on I was put in a low shed to break putrifying bones! The number of prisoners at this work varied from thirty to six, and I may remark that the majority of these were what are termed 'doctor's men,' or prisoners unable to perform the ordinary prison labour. When all the bones would be pounded, we would then be employed in and around the cesspool, mixing and carting manure, and at various other similar occupations.

"I made application to both Governor and doctor for removal from this bone-breaking to some more congenial task, but I would not be transferred to any other labour. After completing a term of my imprisonment which entitled me to a pint of tea in lieu of 'skilly' for breakfast, I was then removed to a hard-labour party, as, owing to my being an invalid, or 'doctor's man,' I could not claim the privilege of this slight change in diet without becoming attached to some hard-labour party—invalids, or 'light labour men,' not being allowed tea at any stage of their imprisonment. I very willingly consented to a heavier task, in order to be removed from the abominable bone-shed, in which I had worked and sickened during the summer.

"My employment after this was various; drawing carts, bogies laden with stone, slates, etc., delving and shifting sand, at which work I was in the habit of using a pick and shovel (though not, I must fairly admit, *compelled* to do so), as the extreme cold made it necessary in order to keep myself from being congealed. I was next employed in winding up stones at an iron crank, during the building of an additional wing to the prison; and this was, beyond doubt, the heaviest work to which they could have put me. A crank party consisted of four men, and my being one of the four compelled me to perform as much work as either of the others, as the task would fall heavier upon them otherwise. This employment was occasionally diversified with 'spells' at mortar-making, water-carrying for same, sand-shifting, cement-making, and various other jobs, among which carrying slates to the roof of the new prison was one—not, of course, up a ladder, but by a steep incline.

"I may remark, in passing, that three prisoners lost their lives while this building was going on, and, in my opinion, those

accidents were attributable to the ignorance of scaffolding arrangements shown by the warders appointed to superintend them. Inquests were held, of course, *inside* the prison; but I never learned that any intelligent prisoner was called upon to give evidence, nor what verdicts were given by what the prisoners in Dartmoor called 'the standing jury.' I may add, also, that my friend, Mr Chambers, fell from a scaffolding at the same building, and, on the principle that 'a man who falls deserves to be kicked for falling,' he was taken to the punishment cells instead of the infirmary, and turned out to work again the following day. When my services as a mason's labourer were no longer required, I was once more put to the old job of stone-breaking, and remained thereat from about the latter part of 1873, until August, 1876.

"During the long winters of those years I was thus employed in a part of the prison yard known to be the coldest place within the walls, where the north-east wind—so prevalent during Dartmoor winters—blew in my face, without my having the slightest shelter from its cutting blast, or any means of keeping my freezing blood in circulation except by plying of my stone-breaking hammer. When snow had fallen during the night, I would have to clear it away from the heap of stones in the morning, and smash away as usual. So excessively cold and long are the Dartmoor winters, that during the past few years the prisoners have had to be supplied with small bags made of the same material as their clothing, by which to shield their hands from the frost-bite and chilblains. Without some such provision to protect them from the effects of the severe cold, little or no outside work could be done by the prisoners.

"I made application to the Governor for some inside labour in winter time; but all requests of mine for change of task were invariably refused, and I had to await unforeseen circumstances to effect what would not otherwise be granted me. An event of this nature saved me from a fourth winter's campaign amidst granite and snow; but as a 'compensation' for this relief it entailed very much heavier work, and caused me to be placed under special surveillance and located in penal cells for the remainder of my imprisonment. This event was what has been called 'the unconstitutional amnesty' of Western Australia.

"After this I was not considered sufficiently safe, as I could have been seen at my stone-breaking in the prison yard by any mischievous people who might hold anti-ticket-of-leave notions on my account. I was, therefore, removed to the prison wash-

house—a place securely situated in the very centre of the prison, and free from all apprehensions of a ‘surprise.’ A wash-house is a place where it might be thought I could not earn my ‘skilly;’ but, without boasting of having distinguished myself in the capacity of a ‘washerwoman,’ or built a reputation in the art of bleaching, I can say, without fear of contradiction from the prison officials, that my work there was the heaviest of any prisoner employed in the wash-house. Another prisoner and myself were told off to the wringing machine, in which linen, etc., for a thousand men, and washings for officers’ mess and rooms, etc., had to be wrung each week, with flannels and sheets for same number once a fortnight and month respectively in addition. My assistant on this machine was changed every week, as men—able-bodied men—had been reported for refusing to remain constantly at such heavy labour; but, as I was physically unable to wash the linen, I was compelled to turn the machine as my principal occupation. The machine being made with a couple of handles, I had to turn as much as my assistant, and very often more, if he proved an idle one. I was considerably reduced in weight while at this employment (which lasted until my release on the 19th of December), from the amount of sweating it entailed, especially during the summer months, and the heavy nature of the work.

“My weight a week after my liberation was but nine stone four pounds, including my clothes, or some eight stone ten pounds without—not, I think, the proper weight for a man six feet high, and at the age of thirty-one. In addition to turning the wringer, I had to sort my share of the dirty linen each Monday morning; and, singularly enough, the infirmary portion was part of my share, and I had consequently to handle the articles worn by prisoners suffering from all manner of skin diseases and other disgusting afflictions. This will finish the necessarily brief account of my various employments in Dartmoor, and, with a description of the daily searchings I was subject to, will conclude my narrative of ordinary treatment while a prisoner.

“I will now briefly relate my exceptional punishment as a political prisoner, and adduce proofs that this treatment was more severe than that of ordinary malefactors, unmerited by my conduct as a prisoner, and, therefore, contrary to the prison rules I was compelled to observe to the very letter. Each prisoner is searched four times each day—Sunday excepted—by the officers under whom he is employed, and liable, in addition to this, to be stripped naked and subjected to a minute and disgusting ex-



amination, or, as it is more properly termed in prison slang, 'turned over,' whenever an officer wishes to do so. I was searched four times each day in common with other prisoners, and had in winter and summer alike to open my jacket and vest, take off my cap, hold out my hand at arm's length, and stand in this manner in the open air, and allow a warder to run his hands from my neck downwards over my body to satisfy himself I had nothing concealed upon my person.

"I was also at regulated intervals taken with other prisoners into a part of the prison where we had all to strip in presence of each other and be minutely searched, but not compelled to strip beyond the shirt. This often occurred in the depth of winter, and I had to stand in this plight while an officer was carefully examining every article of my dress, after having rubbed his hands over my body, and made me open my mouth, to assure himself I had nothing contraband upon me. I was never exempt from any of these searchings during the whole of my imprisonment.

"The charge has often been made against the Government that the Irish political prisoners were treated with greater severity, and subjected to more indignities, than ordinary malefactors, and both Ministers and Government organs have as often denied the truth of these allegations. I will allow facts to substantiate the charge, so far as my own treatment is concerned, and leave the public to draw the inference in the case of those who are still in prison.

"From my arrival in Millbank, in 1870, until my discharge from Dartmoor, I was classed and associated with the ordinary prisoners, placed on the same footing with regard to diet and work, and had in every particular to perform the daily task of penal servitude as laid down by the prison rules.

"A strict compliance with the requirements of these rules entitles a convict to certain privileges at stated intervals during his imprisonment, as regulated by the Penal Servitude Act, which came into force in July, 1864; and such privileges are accordingly allowed to prisoners who strictly observe the conditions imposed upon them. There was no provision made in that Act for the treatment of prisoners convicted for treason-felony, or other offences arising out of insurrectionary movements, and consequently there is no clause in the prison rules specifying the punishment to be awarded to political prisoners, or the granting or curtailing of privileges in such cases. A political prisoner, therefore, who is compelled to observe these rules

in every particular like other prisoners, and to undergo the same penal discipline, is as clearly entitled to all the privileges allowed by those rules as men who are convicted for non-political offences, such as murder, theft, forgery, bigamy, etc. Such, however, has not been the case in regard to myself, and I adduce proofs to confirm this statement. One of the most coveted rewards of good conduct in prison is the privilege of receiving visits from friends at intervals of three, four, and six months, according to the class and time served. A prisoner who has not forfeited his claim to such a privilege by any breach of discipline is as justly entitled to it as to his daily rations of food. Well, during my seven years and seven months' imprisonment, I have been, by the admission of prison officials, a 'good conduct' prisoner, and had, consequently, a right to a visit whenever I demanded one in accordance with the rules; but from the day after my sentence until the day of my discharge I was not allowed to see a friend or receive a visit from any one.

"I made another effort while in Millbank to see some friend, and thinking that no possible objection could be raised against my seeing a lady, I tendered the name of one whom I was anxious to see, as she was a correspondent of my family and a most intimate friend of my own. This application was also refused by an order purporting to come from the then Home Secretary, Mr Bruce (now Lord Aberdare), to the effect that a visit from the lady I had named would not be granted. I was now convinced that I would not be allowed an interview with any of my friends under any conditions, and made no further application for the next few years. I complied with the prison rules in the mean time, notwithstanding my deprivation of the privileges such compliance entitled me to. Several of my friends had also made efforts to obtain leave to see me, but to no purpose. I renewed my application again in August or September, 1874, and was again refused, and no explanation of such refusal given. On the 24th of November, I once more endeavoured to see a friend, but the order for the visit was not forwarded, and I left prison on the 19th of December, without being permitted to see a friendly face during the whole term of my imprisonment.

"I may remark that one of my objects in seeking an interview with some of my friends was to have attention drawn to the case of John Wilson, who had been sentenced with me. Perhaps this was one reason why no visit would be granted.

"Another proof of exceptional treatment. Ordinary convicts, when located according to class, were allowed to select a com-

panion from the same ward to exercise with on Sunday. Mr Chambers and myself were never allowed this privilege. We could select 'companions' from among thieves and murderers, but would not be permitted to even speak to each other at any time, Sundays or other occasions. We made repeated applications to Governors and Directors to have this small boon allowed us, as it was allowed to others; but to no avail. No explanation would be given us why we were thus deprived of what others enjoyed.

"Another instance of unjust treatment is one which I have already touched upon in the particulars of my various employments. Applications for transfer from party to party are of every-day occurrence in prison, and are invariably granted by the Governor, as prisoners are entitled to change of labour when their employments may be either too heavy or injurious to their health, or when they can show themselves more capable of performing one class of work than another. Every application made by me for more suitable employment was refused, and I was invariably put either to labour that would throw as much work upon me as if I were able-bodied, or to some task—such as bone-breaking in a low shed by the prison cesspool in summer, or stone-breaking in the open air during the rigours of winter—which would ensure punishment the most injurious to my health being inflicted upon me. No other conclusion than this is possible from the singularly harsh manner in which I was treated, while complying with the rules in every particular.

"I have before remarked that in the labour of washing and scrubbing my cell, polishing utensils, etc., there was no allowance made for my being deprived of an arm; but I must admit that other prisoners similarly afflicted were treated in that respect in a like manner. This cell work, in addition to my ordinary labour, would tell more upon me than upon an able-bodied prisoner; and, as it also subtracted considerably from the short time at the disposal of prisoners for repose from labour, reading, etc., it would necessarily take more time from me, owing to the difficulties I had to contend with. In order to squeeze the floor-cloth, with which I washed my cell twice a-day, I would have to sit on my stool, place my feet upon the rim of my bucket, then put the cloth round the bucket-handle, and twist it until the water was wrung out of it. As a general rule, I had only a few minutes to spare for reading, so much of my time being necessary to the keeping of my cell as clean as others.

"In June, 1872, I was sent to Portsmouth prison, along with

twenty-nine other prisoners from Dartmoor. In cases of transfer from prison to prison, convicts are handcuffed, by one hand only, to a chain that runs the whole length of the number of prisoners, and passes through a ring in each man's handcuff. By this means each convict has one hand at liberty to eat his food, attend to calls of nature, etc., if he is fortunate enough to be possessed of two; and, if not, it is customary to substitute a body-belt for a handcuff, in order to give him the use of one hand also. No such consideration was shown to me. I was purposely placed between two of the filthiest of the twenty-nine convicts, and had my wrist handcuffed back to back with one of them. I appealed against this ere I left Dartmoor, and requested a belt in lieu of a handcuff, or at least to be put at the end of the chain; but neither would be granted. One of the two between whom I was chained was afflicted with mephitic, or stinking breath, and the other, I think, with scrofula. During the journey to Portsmouth this latter one, to whose hand mine was linked, had an attack of diarrhoea, and I had to submit to the horrors of such a situation, as my hand would not be unlocked from his. All this, however, may have been through the petty malice of the chief turnkey in Dartmoor, and may not have been ordered by the then governor of that prison.

"In Portsmouth prison I was placed on reduced diet, because I was incapable of performing heavy labour, such as barrow-wheeling and the like. Yet, at the task I was put to—"skintling bricks"—I did as much work as those who had two hands to labour with. I explained this to the medical officer, as a plea in favour of being allowed the ordinary prison rations, but I was told that the Secretary of State had ordered that ordinary diet should not be given to men employed at light labour, and that an exception could not be made in favour of me.

"I am bound to remark, however, that the quality of the food in Portsmouth was far superior to that of Dartmoor, and that I suffered very little from the reduction in diet during my five weeks' stay in the former prison. While there, I was once reported for falling out of the ranks to see the doctor, through an attack of quinsy. I was not punished with bread and water, but I had to work for a couple of days without any food whatever, being unable to swallow anything, and receiving neither treatment nor remedy for my indisposition.

"I was ordered back to Dartmoor again on the 16th of July, 1872, and on this return journey I was accompanied by a madman, or, as he would be termed in prison slang, a 'barmy

bloke.' I was handcuffed to him, of course, and, while waiting for a train at Exeter, he managed to divest himself of most of his clothing, because he would not be allowed to ask people for tobacco. My journey back was not much pleasanter than the one coming away. I have made this digression from my exceptionally harsh treatment in Dartmoor, in order to show that in whatever prison I might be incarcerated, the fact of my being a political prisoner exposed me to, rather than saved me from, the most inconsiderate treatment at the hands of the prison officials.

"But to return to proofs of my exceptional punishment in Dartmoor.

"On one occasion (I believe it was in the latter part of 1871), I was ordered by a warder to assist another prisoner in carrying a tub that answered the purpose of a closet for eighty or ninety men, and, on my refusing to do so, I was taken to the punishment cells and kept there—though not on bread and water—for three days, until the doctor had inspected the tub, and found that it was too heavy for me to carry. It was on that occasion I was told by the Governor that I was just like another prisoner, and that he could not 'make fish of one and flesh of another.'

"During the whole of Easter week, 1876, I was confined to punishment cells, and underwent four days' bread and water, with deprivation of privileges of writing and class for two months, for simply refusing to substitute 'sir' for 'here' when answering my name to the assistant-warder in charge of the party to which I belonged. He had no other object in insisting upon this than to satisfy his vanity, unless prompted by some of his superiors to involve me in punishment in this manner. I had always been respectful in my language towards this fellow, though his ruffianly conduct, ignorance, and dirty habits were by-words among both officers and prisoners alike; and, on the occasion of his reporting me, my conduct had not changed towards him in the least from what it had previously been. The prison rules require prisoners to be respectful at all times, but do not lay down specific terms to be used in addressing warders. Hence my punishment was nothing more than a gratuitous piece of petty tyranny.

"It is a rule in prison that a convict's punishment, over and above the ordinary penal discipline, is determined by his conduct as a prisoner, and not by the nature of his offence. This rule is, generally speaking, followed by the Governor, if not by his subordinate officers, in dealing with convicts. Both governors

and subordinates have reversed this rule in my case, I think, as I have already shown. Several instances more can be given. In addition to the same punishment I underwent with the other prisoners, I was subject to closer watching and numberless other annoyances, neither authorised by the rules nor merited by my conduct. During the first winter I spent in Dartmoor, I used to find my cell rummaged and bed-clothes strewn about the damp floor several times a week, and generally upon wet days. I have often come into my seven-foot-by-four cell, dripping wet, after drawing a cart about like a beast of burden in the winter's rain or snow, and, with saturated clothes upon my back, had to gather up my bed and bedding, and put to rights what had been disarranged, for no other motive than to give me work to do during my dinner hour, and thus deprive me of whatever little pleasure I might otherwise enjoy."

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## CHAPTER V.

RELEASED ON TICKET-OF-LEAVE—GRAND RECEPTION IN DUBLIN—SERGEANT M'CARTHY'S DEATH—DAVITT VISITS MAYO—HIS FIRST LECTURE IN ENGLAND.

"And now with shouts and clapping, and noise of weeping loud,  
He enters through the river-gate, borne by the joyous crowd."

MACAULAY.

ON Wednesday morning, December 19, 1877, at 10.30 o'clock, as Davitt was turning the handle of the wringing-machine in Dartmoor Prison wash-house, a warder entered the room and said, "Davitt, put on your jacket, and come this way." Mr Davitt says: "At this time I was very busy, sweating, in fact, at my work, and I thought Mr Ryan had come to visit me. I was taken to the Governor's office. He said to me, 'Davitt, on several occasions I have spoken to you about how good conduct in prison is rewarded, and I am very happy to say that the Secretary of State has taken your case into consideration, and I have now the pleasure of telling you that your good conduct has met with its reward. I have received a communication from the Secretary of State to the effect that you are to be discharged, on a ticket-of-leave, for the remaining portion of your sentence.'"

It need hardly be said that the prisoner was rejoiced by this news. The Governor next turned to the warders present, and

said, "Let him be photographed, and send him off at once." This was done promptly. The prisoner had a suit of clothes given him, £3 put in his pocket, as well as the ticket-of-leave. He was taken to the railway station and sent off to London. "These," says Mr Davitt, "were the circumstances attending my release. I cannot pretend now to tell how high-spirited I felt at regaining my liberty. I rejoiced even in the muddy streets of London. I had spent seven years and seven months in jail. They had done their best during all these years to injure my health and to break my spirit, but I left prison as good an Irishman as I entered it."

On coming to London he was met by his friends, including the members of the Political Prisoners' Visiting Committee. The Chairman, Mr O'Shaughnessy, M.P., heartily congratulated Mr Davitt on his release, and expressed the hope that the other prisoners would soon be free. Mr Davitt thanked his friends and the committee for the cordial reception given him, and the sympathy so earnestly expressed by them at his regaining his liberty. These were the first sincerely kind words that had reached his ear for nearly seven and a half dreary years; they acted as a healing balm, poured on his weary spirit. He again breathed the pure air of freedom, and was surrounded by sympathetic friends, the warmth of whose welcome brought blushes to his attenuated cheeks.

Davitt spent the Christmas in London; and, in a few days afterwards, on Saturday, January 5, 1878, he was joined by Colour-Sergeant M'Carthy and Private John P. O'Brien, both of whom were sentenced in 1866 to penal servitude for life, and were liberated on the day named. Corporal Thomas Chambers, who was undergoing a like sentence with M'Carthy and O'Brien, was also released the week following. The four released prisoners set out at once to visit the land they loved so well, and for which they had suffered so much, and arrived in the city of Dublin, *via* the Holyhead steamer, on Saturday night, January 12. A magnificent ovation awaited them at the Westland Row Station of the Dublin and Kingstown Railway.

The following account of the reception of the patriots in Kingstown and Dublin is taken from the *Freeman's Journal*:—

"The reception given by the patriotic citizens of Dublin to the released prisoners was in every way creditable to the Capital of Ireland. Such a scene as that which was witnessed on the night of their arrival literally defies description. From five

o'clock, expectant crowds had begun to gather on the Kingstown Pier, and, as the time of the arrival neared, the masses of people began to solidify, until from one end of the Carlisle Pier to the other there was a dense crowd, which must have been composed of several thousands of people.

"The following distinguished Irishmen were present from the Reception Committee: Messrs C. S. Parnell, M.P.; Major O'Gorman, M.P.; John O'Connor Power, M.P.; Richard Power, M.P., and John Ferguson, of Glasgow.

"Shortly before six, the lights of the steamer were seen close to the pier; and immediately the cheering, which was continuous for several minutes, and deafening in its heartiness and intensity, commenced, and was caught up from one to another, until it was sent almost to the railway terminus. A bonfire flashed out on Howth, and a little later the signal was caught at Bray Head and Dalkey Hill, and blazes on those heights acted as beacons of rejoicing to the country round. On the Club-House Pier, green lime-lights were shown, torches were lit on the Carlisle Pier, rockets were let off, and, amid these illuminations, waving of hats, cheering, and the crashing of bands, the steamer came alongside. A rush was made on board, and a comparative silence followed, broken again by cheers, which told that the four released men had been found. In a few seconds later they came ashore, and an enthusiastic hand-shaking followed.

"First came Sergeant M'Carthy, a pale, worn-looking old man, evidently in delicate health. He was most warmly received, Major O'Gorman and several others kissing his hand as they shook it. Then Michael Davitt, a comparatively young-looking man, with a heavy black moustache, followed. He had lost his right arm. After he had been greeted a delay occurred, and then O'Brien and Chambers quietly joined their companions, and to the four men then assembled Mr Brennan read the following address, frequently interrupted by hearty applause:—

“ADDRESS OF THE PEOPLE OF DUBLIN

“*To Messrs Charles M'Carthy, Thomas Chambers, John Patrick O'Brien, and Michael Davitt, on their Release from Imprisonment, suffered for Ireland:—*

“FELLOW-COUNTRYMEN,—We approach you, on your release from the sufferings which you have for many years so cheerfully and heroically borne for our country in the prisons of



England, to offer you our warmest congratulations, to bid you, with all the fervour and affection of our hearts, welcome home to Ireland, and to thank you for your courageous and uncompromising devotion to the national cause.

“Roman history reveres the tradition which tells of the heroic self-sacrifice of the patriot Marcus Curtius, who saved the city by casting himself into the yawning abyss opened in the forum. With a self-denying patriotism, equal to his, you have made an offering of life, fortune, and liberty on the altar of your country; and if by such sacrifices as yours her freedom has not been achieved, her honour has been saved, the manhood of her sons vindicated, and a fund of public virtue created amongst us which will yet redeem and regenerate the land.

“Mindful of this, and of all the horrors of penal servitude through which you have been condemned to pass, the capital of your country rejoices in your liberation to-day, and stretches forth its hand to receive you with delight and gratitude.

“The pleasure which we feel, however, is diminished by the recollection that some of your brave companions are still held in captivity; and we cannot conclude without expressing the hope that they, too, may soon be restored to liberty.

“Wishing you every blessing and prosperity in the future, and assuring you of the gratitude of all your countrymen, we again say to you, from our inmost hearts, *Cead Mille Failthe*.

“Signed on behalf of Reception Committee—Charles S. Parnell, M.P.; J. G. Biggar, M.P.; John Dillon, Patrick Egan, James Carey, Thomas Brennan.’

“The four released prisoners having got into a railway carriage with some of their friends, Mr Davitt read a reply on behalf of himself and fellow-prisoners.

“The demonstration of welcome was one of extraordinary magnitude and enthusiasm. For a full hour before the express was due in Westland Row, the elements of a vast torchlight procession were gathering from all the ends of the city in the surrounding streets. Bands of music, with flags flying, and trades’ bodies marshalled behind, passed and repassed until they were lost in one great living mass, which overspread Westland Row, and stretched out into Merrion Square and beyond. The evening being fine, the crowd of ordinary promenaders was increased tenfold; and by half-past six there was not an unoccupied square foot of space in Westland Row. More remarkable even than their numbers was the orderliness and good-humour

of the people. The rough element that is apt to obtrude itself into popular assemblages, after night-fall, was almost entirely absent. Women and young children passed through the thick of the crowd without annoyance; and, even where men were packed together in thousands within a space that should not have contained hundreds, there was nothing but cheerful words and a pleasant bantering during their long wait.

"A tremendous burst of cheering arose when the prisoners were recognised, and it travelled outside, until the street rang with cheers and welcoming music. A United States flag was waved over the carriage, and the enthusiasm of those who were nearest was positively dangerous to the prisoners themselves, who are all of them in delicate health, and several of them marked with signs of prolonged and terrible suffering. So furious was the eagerness of the crowd to clasp hands with them that it was found hopeless to attempt a passage to the street on this side of the platform, and the expedient was adopted of releasing the travellers by the opposite door of their compartment, and smuggling them across the rails to the Ladies' Waiting Room, where they took refuge for nearly half-an-hour. It is said that Sergeant-Major M'Carthy fainted from excitement; and it is certain that, during the whole ordeal, the poor fellow showed signs of having passed through years of dreadful suffering. It was seven o'clock before a way could at last be cleared to the entrance-door, and then the rush was something terrific.

"How the released men themselves managed to reach the carriage in the street outside without being crushed or trampled in the whirl, is amazing. It was nobody's fault, for everybody did his best to make way and keep order; but the crowd was so densely packed that it was impossible for it to open or to move without crush or confusion. The enthusiasm was very great. Mr Parnell, M.P., was recognised within the station, and was heartily cheered. A stout body-guard of young men managed at last, by almost superhuman efforts, to cleave a passage through the crowd by using their long wands horizontally as a kind of battering-rams, and in this way the released men were brought to a waggonette and mounted amidst a scene of terrific enthusiasm. The procession lay, all this time, in irregular segments in all the surrounding district, with hundreds of flambeaux flaming at their heads, and bands playing the national battle-music. Any enumeration of the component parts of the line was out of the question in the darkness, and with the

density of the crowd that surged around the processionists. Some eighteen brass and reed bands were crashing away in the line.

"The trades' bodies mustered in great strength, and the general body of processionists was of vast extent; while every street they passed through was thronged with thousands, who were literally innumerable. By the time the demonstration had taken full shape, one huge mass of human beings covered above a mile of streets. Several thousand torches blazed in knots of about a hundred here and there; and what with the movement of those enormous crowds, the deafening sounds of cheers and martial music, and the glare of all the torches, the scene was one of extraordinary impressiveness. At College Green, the processionists cheered as they passed the Grattan statue, and the prisoners, as they went by in the waggonette, pointed silently to the old Parliament House. At Cork Hill another vast section of processionists from the Thomas Street district joined the line, and at this time the entire of Dame Street, Parliament Street, and Capel Street were covered over with people, illuminated by thousands of torchlights. The procession took three hours in its progress by Dame Street, Parliament Street, the southern quays, Carlisle Bridge, Sackville Street, Henry Street, Mary Street, and so by Capel Street to the European Hotel, Bolton Street. The entire roadway in front of the hotel was densely packed. In all the windows and elevated positions around, crowds assembled, and the enthusiasm and excitement that prevailed were such as have seldom been witnessed in Dublin. A perfect storm of acclamation rent the air when it was known that the procession was near, and when the carriage containing the released prisoners crept through the narrow portion of the street leading to the open carriage-way facing the European, the impatience of the crowd made it almost a physical impossibility that a passage could be made for the procession, the first portion of which arrived shortly before nine o'clock. In one of the large rooms Dr Grattan, a well-known advocate for national independence, was entertaining some friends at dinner, and a motion was at once made to lift the released prisoners from the street into his apartment. O'Brien was lifted up first. The scene inside the hotel was of a most exciting character; the wringing of hands, the congratulations, and the cheers of welcome of which the prisoners were the objects, surpassed description; and when M'Carthy was lifted from the street to the window, the excitement of the moment, and the exhaustion of

the day, seemed to tell upon him very much. He was placed on a couch in a fainting condition, and was quite unable to give utterance to his acknowledgments. The other released prisoner was also raised on the shoulders of the crowd, and passed through the windows. Davitt was brought in by the chief entrance to the hotel.

"Mr Leahy, a local nationalist, addressed the people from the windows, and was followed by some other gentlemen. Loud cries were given for 'a speech from the prisoners,' and ultimately Mr O'Brien came forward and addressed a few words to the multitude. Several members of Parliament called on the released patriots during the evening. The immense crowd remained outside the hotel for some hours, and dispersed in the most peaceable and orderly manner, little thinking that in a couple of days one of the men, in whose honour they had made such an imposing demonstration, would be alike beyond the thanks and congratulations of the Irish people and the torments of the British Government."

A sad event, which threw a gloom over the joy felt by the Irish people at the prisoners' release, and their arrival amongst them in Dublin, occurred two days afterwards. The four ex-prisoners had been invited by Mr Charles Stewart Parnell to breakfast with him in Morrisson's Hotel. On arriving at the hotel they proceeded upstairs; and, after a few minutes' conversation, M'Carthy was observed to grow deadly pale and totter across the room. Davitt was the first to notice him, and rushed to his assistance; poor M'Carthy was laid on a sofa, where Chambers and O'Brien supported his head. Davitt, with admirable presence of mind, did all he could to revive the sinking patriot, while Mr Parnell, Mr John Dillon, and some other gentlemen stood around, sad spectators, unable to give relief to the dying man. All efforts proved unavailing; in a few moments the noble spirit of the martyred soldier passed away beyond the reach of the British tyrant who, for twelve weary years, had tortured it by all the means that hate or devilish ingenuity could devise in an English convict prison. Poor M'Carthy was no more! Worn out by physical starvation and mental agony, the sense of freedom was too strong for him, and he succumbed. The scene around the remains was one of intense sadness. O'Brien raved in his grief; while Chambers, whose nervous system had been shattered during his twelve years' imprisonment, had to be taken away ill. Davitt, who felt the blow as

keenly as the others, never lost his strength of mind, which came to the aid of all; he assumed the management of affairs connected with the mournful event until the termination of the obsequies.

On January 16, an inquest was held on the body of Sergeant Mc'Carthy, and his fellow-prisoners were examined as witnesses. They testified that he had been most severely treated for years in Chatham Prison. He had complained of his heart, and stated that if he died in prison the Governor would be his murderer. The jury gave a verdict of death from heart disease, accelerated by the treatment he received in prison. The announcement of the verdict was received with loud manifestations of concurrence by those who were present.

On Sunday, January 20, 1878, the funeral of Charles Mc'Carthy took place in Dublin. He was buried in Glasnevin, and it is estimated that sixty thousand persons followed the remains to the cemetery in procession, while two hundred thousand were in the streets to express a common sorrow. There were forty bands in the procession, the largest seen since the burial of Daniel O'Connell. The other released prisoners were among the principal mourners. It was a wonderful popular demonstration.

Davitt remained for nine or ten days in Dublin to rest after the fatigue and excitement through which he had just passed, and then went down to Mayo to visit the scenes of his childhood's home. When it became known that he was in the county, turf bonfires blazed on the hills, to welcome him back to the grass-grown spot where once stood the happy home from which landlord tyranny had driven him and his family to seek a living among strangers in a strange land. Bonfires blazed, processional torches were lit, and music floated through the air to welcome back a man who had done a patriot's work for his country, and who had suffered for having done it.

Little was it then thought that shortly afterwards, on those same Mayo hills, Michael Davitt was to kindle a blaze in the breasts of his countrymen which was destined to destroy for ever the landlord power that had torn him, and thousands like him, from peaceful homes in the land of their love and hope—the land which God had given them, but of which man had robbed them.

Enthusiastic receptions were given the patriot in Castlebar, Balla, Westport, and Ballina. Torchlight processions illumined the streets, and the entire people gave a grand and unanimous

verdict *slightly* at variance with that given nearly eight years previously by the English "Twelve" and the British Government. The verdict of the former was that Michael Davitt was a patriot, a martyr, a hero; of the latter, that he was a conspirator, a traitor, and a felon. Well, we suppose Davitt was satisfied with the verdict of his countrymen, and cared little for the opinions of Ireland's enemies. His welcome from the warm-hearted people of the West was such that the "Irish Government" in Dublin Castle took note of the event; and when the fuel-famine visited that section, a year later, on Chief-Secretary "Jimmy" Lowther being appealed to for aid, he replied that "they could find plenty of turf not long since to give bonfire receptions to a released convict." After a brief stay in Mayo, Mr Davitt returned to Dublin, and from thence went to London, accompanied by Chambers and O'Brien. The three released prisoners were cordially received, and shown over the House of Parliament by Messrs Parnell, Biggar, and other Irish members. It was a novel sight to see men who so recently wore the broad arrow on their party-coloured convict jackets, received as honoured visitors in the House of Commons. The evidence given by Davitt and his companions, at the inquest held on Sergeant M'Carthy's remains, as to the cruel treatment to which he and the other political prisoners had been subjected in prison, awakened intense sympathy for the released men, and for those who were still enduring its rigours, and great indignation was expressed against the inhuman system and the government that permitted it. Davitt was not slow to take advantage of the opportunity presented to turn the feeling in favour of the release of the men still held in prison. The ex-prisoners were conducted to a private room in the Parliament House, where they wrote out statements giving the details of sufferings endured and the treatment to which they had been for years subjected; and showing that such had broken down M'Carthy's health and caused his death. This was the record of prison horrors, so well told by Michael Davitt in a previous chapter, and which was mainly instrumental in procuring the release of Robert Kelly, O'Meara Condon, and the other three men some time afterwards. The statements thus made by Davitt and his companions were presented to the Home Secretary, with a request to have them printed. This was, of course, refused, as the Government did not want to place on record against itself such a terrible indictment. Davitt, therefore, had them printed in pamphlet form and circulated.

During his long imprisonment, Davitt made a careful study of the present condition of Ireland, and her dreary past history, and in his solitary hours of thinking he discovered the root of the disease that was eating away the life of the nation for hundreds of years, and the cure that should be applied. The land question was the ulcer, and the remedy is being adopted to-day by the Irish National Land League.

After this, Mr Davitt, accompanied by Corporal Chambers, delivered lectures in the north of England, in Scotland, and Ireland, on the treatment of Irish political prisoners. He devoted himself to the task of working for the release of the men in prison, and was unremitting in his exertions on their behalf. He enlisted the sympathies of the English and Scotch people, and worked hard until his efforts were crowned with success. His first lecture was delivered in St James's Hall, Piccadilly. It being the first public appearance on the lecture platform of a man who has since become famous, we give the announcement entire :—

## I R I S H M E N !!!

A MEETING WILL BE HELD IN ST JAMES'S HALL, PICCADILLY,

*On SATURDAY, the 9th MARCH next,*

For the purpose of directing PUBLIC OPINION to the subject of the  
treatment of the

### IRISH POLITICAL PRISONERS.

Mr MICHAEL DAVITT, one of the lately released prisoners, will give

A N A D D R E S S .

JOHN O'CONNOR POWER, Esq., M.P., will take the Chair, and the following M.P.'s have promised to attend :

Lord Francis Conyngham, Mitchell Henry, C. S. Parnell, J. G. Biggar, T. Earp, D. Davies, John Barron, J. W. Pease, A. M. Sullivan, Dr Ward, J. D. Hutchinson, E. Dwyer Gray, G. H. Kirk, Keyes O'Clery, Joseph Cowen, Major O'Gorman, Sir Joseph N. M'Kenna, Bart. ; also, Messrs Chambers and O'Brien, late Political Prisoners.

The Chair will be taken at 7.30 o'clock.

Robert Kelly was released in the following August in a dying condition. On Saturday morning, August 3, at about eleven o'clock, Captain Barlow, the Governor, Mr Hackett, and

Chief Warder Murphy, went to Kelly's bedside in the prison "hospital," Mountjoy Prison, Dublin. Captain Barlow acted as spokesman, and said: "Kelly, I have come to you with news that will not be altogether unpleasant, and I hope you will hear it without allowing your excitement to get the better of you. I have brought you the free pardon of His Grace, the Duke of Marlborough, on the usual conditions of a ticket-of-leave." The news came like a thunderbolt upon the prisoner, who, after recovering himself, said that he would not accept a pardon on such conditions. He added that, from what prisoners told him of a ticket-of-leave, he would always feel as though he dragged a long chain about with him through life, which any policeman might trample on at pleasure, to drag him back again to penal servitude.

He was right! It has proved so in Davitt's case; *he* has been dragged back by the chain that bound the ticket-of-leave to the convict prison. The *Freeman's Journal*, commenting on the condition of Kelly on his release, and examination by Dr Kenny, said:—

"The plain fact is, these revelations cannot be any longer tolerated. No nation could maintain legitimate prestige which systematically repressed crime by crime. It matters not to what class of politicians a man may belong; politics do not make us savage; and we believe no one will read the story of this wretched man without feeling that England is shamed and disgraced before the world by permitting men to be done to death by a cold-blooded and relentless discipline."

A notable event happened during the month of August, which we cannot pass over without mentioning. It was the death, in raving madness, of a miserable renegade—a wretch, the events in whose political career are a blotch on his country's history, who was hated and despised by all honest Irishmen—the infamous Judge Keogh, one of the surviving worthies of "*the Pope's Brass Band*." He was staying near Brussels for his health, and went mad; he made an attempt on the life of his valet with a razor, dangerously cutting him in several places. He died raving, and, when the news of the tragic event reached Ireland, his obituary was chanted in curses by his outraged countrymen. He who had sent so many into British dungeons, with a string of vituperation tacked on to their sentences—for a *crime* (!) to which he himself had sworn allegiance; but, like Iscariot, perjured himself, on receiving the "thirty pieces of



silver" as the price of the betrayal of his country—met the reward he deserved by a miserable death in a strange land. He went down

"To the vile dust from whence he sprung,  
Unwept, unhonoured, and un—" *hung!*

as he deserved to be.

## CHAPTER VI.

DAVITT'S FIRST VISIT TO AMERICA—SEED OF THE LAND LEAGUE SOWN BY  
ADVANCED NATIONALISTS—THE NEW DOCTRINE EXPOUNDED BY DAVITT  
—A NATIONAL PLATFORM PROPOSED.

"O, lovely isle, beyond the waves,  
Ireland, our home !  
Where shamrocks deck our fathers' graves,  
Our childhood's home !  
In far, far climes we kneel in prayer,  
To Him who rules earth, sea, and air,  
To end thy bondage and despair,  
Ireland, our native home !" —R. D. JOYCE.

ABOUT the beginning of August, 1878, Michael Davitt made his first visit to the United States, his object being to bring back to Ireland his mother and sisters, then living in Manayunk, Pa. After his arrival, he wrote as follows to England, to his friend, Thomas Chambers :—

"MANAYUNK, PHILADELPHIA, August 15, 1878.

"MY DEAR TOM,—You will be glad to hear that I found my mother in much better health than I expected, after her long years of trouble and anxiety. She appears twenty years younger since I promised to take her back to Ireland. My voyage was a very pleasant one; and, so far, I like the country and the people I met very much. Philadelphia is the handsomest city I ever saw. I only stayed a few hours in New York, as John and myself were invited to a pic-nic at a distance. . . . I am to lecture in Philadelphia on the 16th of September; subject, 'The Ireland of the present.' About the 20th, I am to give a 'prison' lecture in New York, and I am to devote the proceeds to the relief of Daniel Reddin and John Wilson—he who was tried with me. Health capital. Fear I

won't get back as early as I expected, as I am requested to go out West, as far as San Francisco, and lecture. . . . Ever sincerely yours,  
"MICHAEL."

Invitations to lecture now came pouring in on Mr Davitt. The Irish-Americans everywhere were anxious to see and hear him, so that he was kept busy on the lecture platform.

Meanwhile Mr Parnell, and the intrepid half-dozen Irish members who acted with him, had attracted much attention, and the admiration of their countrymen, by the obstructive tactics so successfully practised in the House of Commons. They were only a few; but they demonstrated to the Irish people what even a few determined men could do, by clogging the wheels of legislation, and—as the champion of universal liberty, Wendell Phillips, says—"forcing John Bull to listen." The Home Rule organisation, after years of unsuccessful agitation, was languishing. Isaac Butt, the leader, and his immediate followers having on various questions supported the Ministry, much dissatisfaction was caused, and people were beginning to tire of the frequent defeats in Parliament of the party, and to give up all hope of obtaining their demands through agitation. Parnell and his fellow-workers, however, struck a chord that reverberated pleasingly on the Irish ear; he threw vigour and spirit into the fight, and infused a new soul into the dying Home Rule organisation. He, and not Butt, was henceforth the leader. Parnell was the people's choice. The young Hercules, calm, determined, wise, and energetic, revolutionised the old petitioning—begging—method, and began to attack the enemy's weak point. He first compelled Parliament to listen, then *demand*ed, and now *dictates* the measures that Ireland will accept as final, or otherwise.

On October 21, 1878, a Convention of Home Rulers met in the Rotunda, Dublin, and continued their sitting for three days. Mr Parnell presided. A large number of delegates from England and Scotland attended. In the course of his speech, Mr Parnell said:—

"I want the country to know its own mind above all things, and when the country knows its own mind I want it to be united in carrying out that mind, whatever it is. Upon the question of policy and conduct, let Ireland make up her mind upon what she is going to do; and when she has made up her mind, let her show her mind, and it must be obeyed; but if she hesitates about her attitude, then I say you are lost, at all events

for some years. I don't believe in any country, or in any cause, much less Ireland and Ireland's cause, being lost for any long time; but you will lose it for some time—for some years. Anything that has been gained, has been got by good luck rather than by good management. I said when I was last on this platform, that I would not promise anything by parliamentary action, nor any particular line of policy; but I said we could help you to punish the English, and I predicted that the English would very soon get afraid of the policy of punishment. Well, they did not stand that process of punishment very long last session—they stood it for about four months. They tried every plan and every method to get over us, and we beat them. They gave us the last two months of the session all to ourselves, for Ireland. That was a thing they never did before, but I venture to predict that they will do it again."

He asked that help be sent the active party in Parliament, as otherwise nothing could be got from that body, and said that, if such did not result, he and his friends would retire into private life, as "that would be the only course open to an honourable man." An active policy was agreed on; sixteen Irish members gave in their adhesion to the new programme, and it was agreed to contest all the seats occupied by Home Rulers who opposed obstruction, and to make an open issue with Isaac Butt before the people.

While this change of front was taking place in Ireland, new seed was being prepared in America to cast into the field of Irish politics which was destined to take deep root in a soil ready to receive it; to spring into life, and spread its roots and branches all through the land; to blossom into THE IRISH NATIONAL LAND LEAGUE.

Michael Davitt's busy brain was at work. He was in frequent consultation with some of Ireland's noblest and most daring exiled sons—men of ability and keen foresight. The result was, that about the end of October, immediately after the Home Rule Conference had closed its session, the leaders of the advanced Irish Nationalists in America cabled from New York "to Mr Parnell and his political friends," the following proposal of co-operation on the conditions mentioned. The despatch, however, was to be submitted to a number of representative Nationalists in Dublin for their approval, before being presented to Mr Parnell. It was as follows:—

"The Nationalists here will support you on the following conditions:—

*'First, Abandonment of the federal demand, and substitution of a general declaration in favour of self-government.*

*'Second, Vigorous agitation of the land question on the basis of a peasantry proprietary, while accepting concessions tending to abolish arbitrary eviction.*

*'Third, Exclusion of all sectarian issues from the platform.*

*'Fourth, Irish members to vote together on all imperial and home questions, adopt an aggressive policy, and energetically resist coercive legislation.*

*'Fifth, Advocacy of all struggling nationalities in the British Empire and elsewhere.'"*

Though no union was effected with Mr Parnell, the seed was sown by electricity; we see to-day the blossom; the fruit is ripening.

A new Irish national movement that could embrace on a common platform all organised bodies and the whole Irish race—was born; it has since grown to immense proportions, and has the support of all classes of Nationalists. It has not yet, however, grown to its full proportions, but it is rapidly developing, and is to-day strong enough to withstand the shock of British coercion without being badly damaged by the encounter.

Davitt now began in earnest the task of spreading the seed in America of the new Irish national movement. His lectures opened new ideas to the minds of the thousands who came to hear him. His language was clear, liberal, and bold. He reconciled the extremists everywhere he spoke to the new policy, and laid the foundation of the great American organisation. The following masterly address on the "Future Policy of Irish Nationalists," which he delivered in Mechanics' Hall, Boston, on December 8, 1878, before his departure for Ireland, being his first great effort in oratory, and a clear exposition of the reasons for unity of action amongst all classes of Irishmen, we give in full\*:

"It would be difficult to conceive a position more unenviable than that in which an Irish Nationalist places himself when he attempts to review the past of his party in order to point out what he believes to have been rash or impolitic in its career. A criticism of the wisdom of an action that has failed or a line of conduct which has been injudicious, is at once construed into disloyalty to the principles or party which may have prompted

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\* Herein can be plainly traced the doctrines and plans of the subsequent land agitation in Ireland.

such action by a sincere but imprudent resolve. But when he expresses himself dissatisfied with the narrow sphere of a policy which tends to exclude from National labour every one but a pronounced Separatist, and adds his belief that a change of tactics would turn the exertions of sincere Irishmen, though now pronounced Separatists, into the National cause, he is at once assumed to have 'forfeited his principles,' and to be on the high road to West-Britonism.

"In consequence of this proneness of the Irish mind to hasty and uncharitable deductions, men (who *think* while working in Ireland's cause) are deterred from condemning what they know to be injudicious, lest they should find themselves ostracised from its ranks for their anxiety to see it directed the surest way to success. In my humble opinion, a want of moral courage belittles a man far more than a deficiency in the physical article, and that real cowardice consists in dreading the sentimental consequences of an upright, honest action. It has ever been the practice to pander to the popular prejudices of our country by hyperbolic eulogies on everything Irish, and we have thus become the spoiled children of struggling nationalities, and, as a necessary consequence, backward in our political education as a people, as well as behind the progressive march of the age. Holding these opinions, I will endeavour to-night to show you how we ourselves are to blame for past failures, and how essential it is that the causes which led to such failures be guarded against in the future. The indestructibility of Irish nationality is no more its distinguishing characteristic than is its past inapplicability to the working out of its own success, or the winning of an advanced social and political position for the people who profess it. We can boast that hundreds of years of the worst rule that ever cursed a country has failed to crush it; but can we say that Ireland is to-day in a condition commensurate with the struggles and sacrifices of her sons on her behalf during the past seven centuries? I think not; and the 'why and wherefore' of this fact is what should focus upon it the thought and studies of practical Nationalists of the present. That there has been an unmethodical application of energies, or rather, a reckless waste of national strength in this long contest, is but too patent from a comparison between the position, social and political, of our country to-day; and that of other peoples who have struggled successfully against the same enemy. The very strength of our purpose and determination of our resolves were the means which invited defeat. We grasped at liberty in the

intoxication of sincerity, and blindly discarded every other practical consideration. We 'resolved,' and 'swore,' and 'determined' to *avenge Ireland's wrongs!* but took no essential method to win her liberty. We were actuated as much by *revenge* as by patriotism, and received the penalty which follows the obeying of a passion instead of the dictates of a virtue. While recognising that it was a war of races, Saxon against Celtic, we refused to shelter ourselves behind the ramparts of expediency or employ any of the many justifiable means by which a weak people might utilise their strength; and we therefore marched into the open plain inviting destruction. Instead of watching our enemy from behind the Torres Vedras of Ireland's imperishable national principles, and determining our action by his weakness or strength according to the powers arrayed against him, we left our position exposed in order to challenge him to single combat, and we never marched to the Paris of the British Empire to see him relinquish his spoils or surrender his conquests.

"No greater mistake could be made by Fenianism than the drawing of but a single line of distinction between a West Briton and the Irishman who accepted its programme of action as the safe, certain, and only means of winning independence. The assumption that all Irish Nationalists were included in the Fenian organisation was a piece of disastrous folly, as it engendered a bitter hostility to earnest Irishmen who only refused to follow a leader whom they did not know in a movement which confined itself to a single class of their countrymen. Thus a host of enemies were created where the reserve force of a real national movement should find strength and support.

"Now, a fault-finder or critic has no claim to a fair hearing, unless he has something reasonable to substitute for or amend in what he condemns. I will, therefore, with your indulgence, attempt to point out what, in my opinion, would place our national cause upon a stronger footing, and multiply its chances of success in the near future.

"As I have freely censured the past policy of my own party, it may have created a suspicion in your minds that it was the party itself, or its principles, which I attacked under cover of a review of its past history. I trust it will not need my assurance to convince you to the contrary, and that whatever other agencies, expedient, moral, or diplomatic, which I may desire to see added to the factors at work in the national cause, I am convinced that it is only the manhood strength of Ireland which can

give the *coup-de-grace* to her enemy's rule over her. This belief does not exclude the employment of any other means ; and it is on this ground I rest a claim for the utilising of every safe and justifiable expedient in the working out of our country's social and political redemption. It is well, therefore, to look outside the National party in Ireland, to reconnoitre our friends or enemies, and see how far the one can be counted upon, and how much the other is to be dreaded.

"The Ireland of the present may be divided into four distinct sections of political strife, presumably in her interest : the Nationalists, Parliamentary, neutral or non-participant Irishmen, and West Britons.

"Take the first of these parties, which, on account of its being the custodian of Ireland's non-forfeited right to independence, should necessarily be the most powerful in numbers and influence ; yet we must admit that it is not so, when it is looked at either in the light of its recent past endeavours or from its present hold on the public mind of Ireland. But let it be disassociated from the consequences of sincere but injudicious or premature action, and pitted against anti-national feeling in Ireland, and it possesses at once the unquestioned representative sentiment of the Irish people, and outnumbers, in its adherents, all the other parties combined.

"The position which we occupy in the political world is, therefore, a singularly anomalous one, for while our people are unquestionably national in their inward convictions, they exhibit in their external or public aspect a contradiction to that very fact. Hence the world either misunderstands or discredits our political aspirations. Now, how is it that the Nationalist party is numerically the strongest in sentiment and sympathy, while not so in action ? And why does external opinion remain sceptical as to Ireland's real desire for independence ?

"To answer the first question, I will crave permission to place myself in the position of a tiller of the soil in Ireland—say one of Patten Bridge's victims, on the barren slopes of the Galtees. I will assume I have just reached the level of my mud-walled cabin, on the mountain side, after carrying a load of manure on my back from the plains below. I have seen the shorthorns, and black-faced sheep, from England and Scotland, grazing upon the rich land at the foot of the mountains—the land which formerly belonged to my ancestors, and the produce of which is now fattening brute beasts while my six children

are starving with hunger. I might be supposed to say—‘How is it that I, who have done no wrong to God, my country, or society, should be doomed to a penal existence like this? Who are they that stand by and see the beasts of the field preferred before me and my family? I am powerless to do anything but provide for the cravings of those whom God has sent to my care, and to relax my labour for a day might be a day’s starvation to my little ones. If I go down to the castle and avenge my wrongs on the head of Patten Bridge, I am but injuring him, and not the system which enables him to plunder me. I must, therefore, refrain from an act which would see *me* die on the scaffold, and *my* children in the work-house. If no one else will assist me, I am condemned to this miserable existence for the remainder of my life. Who are they that have time and energy to take part in the political strife of the day, and say they are working for Ireland and me? The Nationalist party tells me that when independence is won, I will no longer be at the mercy of an English landlord. That is like feeding my children with a mind’s-eye-view of the dinner that will be served in Galtee Castle to-day. Yellow meal porridge is a more substantial meal than visionary plenty, and if the Nationalists want me to believe in, and labour a little for, independence, they must first show themselves desirous and strong enough *to stand between me and the power which a single Englishman wields over me*. If they show they can *do that*, and thereby better my condition, they will convince me of their strength in Ireland, and earnestness in my behalf, and it is not in Irish nature to refuse a helping hand to those who assist another. Let them show that the social well-being of our people is the motive of their actions, and aim of their endeavours, while striving for the grand object ahead, and then the farming classes in Ireland will rally round them to assist in reaching that object. They look upon a man’s existence in an abstract light, and think he should be moved in their cause without consulting that selfishness which is invariably the mainspring of human actions. God only knows how much I would like to fight for Ireland to-morrow if I could only see a chance of success, or had my wife and children in a similar position to that in which, I am told, the farmers of France and Belgium have theirs; but every former attempt at success has failed, me and mine are still at the mercy of the landlord, and therefore I can only give the Nationalists my sympathy and well-wishes, for my labour, time, and life, is necessary to the feeding of little Nora and the



other children. The Parliamentarians promise to do more for me than any other party, but they break their promises in Westminster, and show as great an interest in Turkey as in Ireland. They are also at war with the Nationalists, and consequently the Government and the West Britons have it all their own way over the vast majority of the Irish people. Me, and the likes of me, are told we have friends in all parties, but we never are made to feel anything but the power and influence of our enemies—the landlords. I must bring up another creel of dung from the bottom of the mountain before mid-day, and then share my bowl of stirabout with my little ones. God's will be done, but it is a hard life to lead in the Nineteenth century !

“ This is no exaggeration of the thoughts or attitude of the people who are compelled to stand aloof from political strife in Ireland ; and this vast class, recruited alike from the one instanced, as well as from all those whose avocations and actions have their root in the *virtue of the honest, selfish cares of social life*, are within reach of the party of action, if the necessary steps are taken to enlist their assistance and co-operation.

“ Turning to the political aspect of Irish nationality, as it is viewed from abroad, it is easy to show how we have been, and are still, discredited with practical earnestness in our opposition to English rule. We have flattered ourselves too long with the belief that we were assured of French and American sympathy in our contest with the enemy of our race, and that these and other countries would accept of our spasmodic struggles against a dominant power as proving the disaffection and determined opposition of a whole people, while ‘ representatives,’ municipalities, religious and other bodies, public men and public writers, were convincing them to the direct contrary. ’Tis true that periodical attempts at insurrection have shown that though our country is subjugated it is not reconciled to alien government or willing to forfeit its national birthright ; but, convincing as all this may be to *Irishmen*, others will look upon our repeated risings in the light of past events, and speak of them in proportion to their importance, as looked at from an external point of view, while weighing us in the political balance of nationalities in exact accordance with the public spirit and political tendencies of our people of the present. The collective opinions of foreign nations, in sympathy with or indifference towards the Irish question, will be formed from its present phases, and not, as *we* would desire, from past occurrences ; and, therefore, the less our national aspirations and convincing opposition to alien

rule are manifested to the world by the *public* tone and attitude of our people, the less interest there will be taken and sympathy felt by the world in our cause. Our connection with the past of Ireland—the inspiration we draw from its history, and the events therein recorded—must influence, of course, our line of action in the working out of the political destiny of our fatherland; but our past history will not win for us one iota of sympathy from outside the Irish race beyond what is demanded by the consistency of our actions with the object aimed at, and the practical manner in which the national desire for the attainment of that object is manifested.

“When we appeal to mankind for the justice of our cause, we must assume the attitude of a *united*, because an earnest, people, and show reason why we refuse to accept of our political annihilation. We can only do this by the thoroughness of purpose which should actuate, and the systematic exertions which alone can justify, us in claiming the recognition due to a country which has never once acquiesced in its subjugation, nor abandoned its resolve to be free. Viewing that country, then, as she presents herself to-day, the problem of her redemption may be put in this formula: Given the present social and political condition of Ireland, with the public spirit, national tendencies, physical and moral forces of her people—together with the power, influence, and policy arrayed against them—to indicate what should be the plans pursued, and action adopted, whereby the social condition of our people could be materially improved, and the right efforts made to raise them to their rightful position as a Nation.

“I confess to the difficulty of solving such a problem, but not so much as to the putting it into practice if theoretically demonstrated; but

“‘Right endeavour’s not in vain—  
Its reward is in the doing;  
And the rapture of pursuing  
Is the prize the vanquished gain.’

“Let us see if we can discover a key to the difficulty of the Irish question. I will assume that there are certain matters or contingencies important to or affecting the Irish race which are of equal interest to its people (irrespective of what differences of opinion there may be amongst them on various other concerns)—such as the preservation of the distinctive individuality of the race itself among peoples; the earning for it that respect and prestige to which it is by right and inheritance entitled, by

striving for its improvement, physically and morally, and its intellectual and social advancement, revival of its ancient language, etc; and that there are past occurrences and sectional animosities which all classes must reasonably desire to prevent in future, for the honour and welfare of themselves and country—such as religious feuds and provincial antipathies. I will also assume that the raising of our peasant population from the depths of social misery to which it has been sunk by an infamous land system, would meet with the approval of most classes in Ireland, and receive the moral co-operation of Irishmen abroad, as would also the improvement of the dwellings of our agricultural population and condition of our labourers. Without particularising any further measures for the common good of our people, for which political parties cannot refuse to mutually co-operate, if consistent with their *raison d'être*, as striving for their country's welfare, I think it will be granted that Nationalists (pronounced or quiescent), Obstructionists, Home Rulers, Repealers, and others, could unite in obtaining the reforms already enumerated by concerted action on and by whatever means the present existing state of affairs in Ireland can place within their reach. Such concerted action for the general good would necessitate a centre platform, as representing that central principle or motive which constitutes the hold and supplies the influence that a country's government has upon the people governed. -

“A race of people, to preserve itself from destruction by an hostile race, or by partisan spirit and factious strife internally, or absorption by a people among which it may be scattered, absolutely requires some central idea of governmental principle by which to exercise its national functions and preserve its individuality. A people's own established government supplies this need, of course, but where, as in Ireland, there is no government of or by the people, and the dominant power is but a strong executive faction, the national strength is wasted—1. By the *divide et impera* policy of that dominant English faction; 2. By desperate attempts to overthrow that power; and 3. By hitherto fruitless agitation to win a just rule, or force remedial legislation from an alien assembly by means repugnant to the pride of the largest portion of our people; while here, in this great shelter-land of peoples, the Irish race itself is fast disappearing in the composite American. If, therefore, a platform be put forth embodying resistance to every hostile element pitted, or adverse influence at work, against the social progress

and national individuality of Ireland, and a programme of practical labour for the general welfare of our country be adopted, resting upon first principles and those wants and desires which have a first claim upon the consideration of Irishmen—such a platform, if put forth, not to suit a particular party, but to embrace all that is earnest and desirous among our people for labour in the vineyard of Ireland's common good, a great national desire would be gratified, and an immense stride be taken towards the goal of each Irishman's hopes.

“Such a centre-composite platform would not necessarily require any control over the organisations of its respective party-adherents. All that it would demand from its individual elements would be such support as should make its influence over the public life of Ireland superior to that which the *English faction* wields to our disgrace and disadvantage to-day. Apart from the material good which would assuredly follow from such a platform being adopted, how inestimable would be the collateral advantages that would accrue from Irishmen *acting together at last* for some tangible common benefit to be conferred upon themselves and their country! The gradual but certain sweeping away of West-British ideas before the advance of a united national Irish sentiment; the harmonising of the hitherto conflicting elements in political parties; the developing of our people's political education; the creation of a healthy and vigorous public spirit which would at once attract the attention of foreign opinion, and concentrate upon Ireland an international interest in a *renaissant* people, who can exert a powerful influence over the destiny of a declining empire, the prestige and power of which are obnoxious to rival nations. Then the immense impetus which would be given to the national cause by the moral support of a sympathetic participation in it by the vast Irish and Irish-American element in this country, by far the greater part of which has heretofore stood aloof from Ireland's struggles, in consequence of having no feasible plan laid before it whereby its assistance and influence could be profitably employed in the same.

“The difficulties in the way of such an united Irish public movement are to be found in the unreasonable prejudice and suicidal antagonism which exists between the two parties who each assume to be Ireland's benefactor—the Nationalist and the Irish-Constitutional bodies. This mutual opposition has weakened both, diffused bad blood among the community, increased the number of non-participants in the political life of the country,

and strengthened the position of the coercive faction. Condemnation of Nationalist action by Irish Constitutionalists is permissible only within the limits of a censure upon desperate, untimely resolves on insurrection, as their opposition is unjustifiable upon any other ground.

"The Nationalist party is the guardian of their country's inalienable right to be mistress of her own destinies; its records are those which tell of a nation's fight against the extermination of its people; its martyrology is that of Ireland, and all of what we can justly be most proud of in her history—her seven centuries' struggle against overwhelming odds for the highest ambition of a nation (independence)—is the platform of the Nationalist party. Its very defeats have won victories for the Constitutionalists; and the intensity of its earnestness has compelled remedial measures to be conceded to Ireland. As the Irishman who believes that his country could not govern herself if politically isolated is too contemptible to be noticed, the objection against the Nationalist party by its Constitutional opponent is belief in the improbability of success—and not antagonism to the object aimed at.

"On the other side, the prejudice existing among Nationalists against Constitutional action is in proportion to the anti-National complexion which it assumes; hence, Home Rule, from its being so much more un-Irish in essence and scope, is looked upon with greater antipathy than simple Repeal. Giving the Constitutionalists credit, as in charity bound, for the best intentions, we must assume that they are actuated by the following reasons and motives:—Believing in the impossibility of separation, they rely upon moral force as a means of advancing the interests of the country, and that they employ this means in the conviction that it is the safest and most efficient plan by which an improvement of the people can be effected, and their country benefited. When the acts of Constitutionalists belie these motives, they become reprehensible; but in their honesty of conduct within the lines of honest action, they are deserving of, and entitled to, recognition and tolerance at the hands of Nationalists, as labourers in behalf of Ireland and its people. They are more prominent in the political arena than the Nationalists, as they have a public policy to catch the public ear and eye. They have a following in Ireland which is at once powerful and influential, and cannot, therefore, be ignored. They have enlisted the support of the Catholic clergy, and count the middle class of the country as belonging to their party. Since

the passing of the ballot-bill, they can appeal with more force to Irish voters, who no longer run the risk of eviction for opposing landlord nominees. This freedom from restraint in the exercise of the franchise among a remedy-seeking people must logically impel them to look for redress, and men to champion their cause, in the safest, and, to them, most effectual means within their reach.

"To these facts must be added still stronger ones, namely, that, whether we Nationalists like it or not, Irish voters, as well as non-electors, will participate in elections, and interest themselves in their results. So long as the infamous Act of Union lasts, men will be sent to Westminster to represent or betray their country, in exact proportions to the interest or indifference with which the whole Irish people look upon Parliamentaryism. The indication of a national resolve to minimise the disgrace of a traitor-representation in an hostile assembly would curb the self-seeking place-hunters in the auction of their 'patriotism' and themselves in St Stephen's political mart. Hostility towards, or complete isolation from, parliamentary action by the Nationalist, will engender and encourage West-Britonism in Irish representation, and the world, which persists in looking at the Irish question through the medium of the House of Commons, will form its opinions on the wants and political tendencies of Ireland from the conduct and utterances of her 'representatives.' The amount of national sentiment and hostility to alien rule, exhibited in Westminster by Irish members of Parliament, will be to Russia, France, and America the gauge of the same sentiment and hostility in Ireland, where such members are elected. With the public ear in Ireland, and the eye and attention of the world's most conspicuous assembly, *how do the Constitutionalists stand in a contest for party influence with the Nationalists, who have neither?* Suppose the positions and advantages reversed in the last respect, at least, would the Nationalists be weaker and the cause of Ireland worse situated? I think not.

"Having defined the relative positions and strength of the two great parties in Irish politics, no other conclusion can be come to but this: that until an understanding, base of public union, or common public platform is established between them, the Executive faction, *alias* Castle government, will influence, direct, and domineer the official and public life of Ireland, and her people 'may whistle to the winds for self-government, or escape from the Saxon's control.'

"Now, let us put prejudices one side, and honestly look at

facts, and we will find that parliamentary action during the past few years has been trying to clothe itself in the garb of honesty, notwithstanding numerous instances of betrayal of trust. Mr Isaac Butt, in giving a Federal complexion to Ireland's constitutional holiday garment for Westminster parade, was endeavouring to make Imperial broadcloth out of Irish frieze, and he has become politically bankrupt in consequence of failure. Abstract this disagreeable feature, together with the un-Irish conduct and treachery of some of Mr Butt's supporters, from the action of Irish members in the House of Commons during the past few years, and we will find a more national and determined stand taken for Ireland and against the government than at any former period in that assembly. Seeing this, finding large classes of our people boasting of it, and recognising the fact that the centre figure of this stubborn attitude in an hostile assembly has, in the small space of four years, become the most popular and most trusted of Irishmen, is there not something good to be got out of Nazareth after all? If so, let us see how it can be increased.

"For the present good of Ireland, and as a policy of expediency, I, as a Nationalist, could support the following programme consistently with my own principles and Ireland's present wants :—

"1st. The first and indispensable requisite in a representation of Ireland in the Parliament of England to be a public profession of his belief in the inalienable right of the Irish people to self-government, and recognition of the fact that want of self-government is the chief want of Ireland.

"2nd. An exclusive Irish representation, with the view of exhibiting Ireland to the world in the light of her people's opinions and national aspirations, together with an uncompromising opposition to the government upon every prejudiced or coercive policy.

"3rd. A demand for the immediate improvement of the land system by such a thorough change as would prevent the peasantry of Ireland from being its victims in the future. This change to take the form of a system of small proprietorships, similar to what at present obtains in France, Belgium, and Prussia. Such land to be purchased or held directly from the State. To ground this demand upon the reasonable fact that, as the land of Ireland formerly belonged to the people (being but nominally held in trust for them by chiefs, or heads of clans, elected for that among other purposes), it is the duty of the

government to give compensation to the landlords for taking back that which was bestowed upon their progenitors after being stolen from the people, in order that the State can again become the custodian of the land for the people-owners.

“4th. Legislation for the encouragement of Irish industries; development of Ireland's natural resources; substitution, as much as practicable, of cultivation for grazing; reclamation of waste lands; protection of Irish fisheries, and improvement of peasant dwellings.

“5th. Assimilation of the county to the borough franchise, and reform of the grand jury laws, as also those affecting convention in Ireland.

“6th. A national solicitude on the question of education by vigorous efforts for improving and advancing the same, together with every precaution to be taken against it being made an anti-national one.

“7th. The right of the Irish people to carry arms.”

“It will be objected by some that to meddle in parliamentary action, no matter how honest, is contrary to Nationalist principles, and therefore censurable. No man likes to put his hands in pitch; but if he is tarred and feathered for no fault of his own, and against his will, he must clean himself as best he can. The pitch of English rule on Ireland will not be removed by kid-gloved indifference and straight-laced, lofty patriotic consistency; it is better to commence scrubbing it off wherever more can be otherwise added. It will be again objected that if a strong National party were sent to Parliament, and it succeeded in obtaining some remedial measures, the people of Ireland would be contented with what they would thus obtain, and cease to strive for independence. Granted that a portion of our people would ‘rest and be thankful’ for a better condition of affairs than they live under at present; but would the Nationalist party be so? If it would not, there is no earthly justification for an abstention from endeavouring to benefit even those that would accept the situation, when side by side with their social and political advancement would be that of those who would not take it as a final settlement of the question.

“Again, the supposition that the spirit of Irish nationality, which has combated against destruction for seven centuries, only awaits a few concessions from its baffled enemy to be snuffed out thereby, does not speak highly for those who hold that opinion of its frailty. In my opinion, we may expect to hear no more of ‘the cause’ when the genius of Tipperary shall



carve the Rock of Cashel into a statue of Judge Keogh, and Croagh Patrick shall walk to London to render homage to the Duke of Connaught. Every chapter of our history, every ensanguined field upon which our forefathers died in defence of that cause, every name in the martyrology of Ireland, from Fitzgerald to Charles M'Carthy, proclaim the truth of Meagher's impassioned words: 'From the Irish mind the inspiring thought that there once was an Irish Nation self-chartered and self-ruled can never be effaced; the burning hope that there will be one again can never be extinguished.'

"With these convictions, and the consummation of such hopes predestined by an indestructible cause and imperishable national principles, Irish Nationalists can, without fear of compromising such principles, grapple with West-Britonism on its own ground, and strangle its efforts to imperialise Ireland. The popular party in Ireland has a right to participate in everything concerning the social and political condition of the country; to compete with the constitutional and other parties who cater for public support, and stamp in this manner its Nationalist convictions and principles upon everything Irish, from a local board of poor-law guardians to a (by circumstances compulsory) representation in an alien parliament.

"No party has a right to call itself National which neglects resorting to all and every justifiable means to end the frightful misery under which our land-crushed people groan. It is exhibiting a callous indifference to the state of social degradation to which the power of the landlords of Ireland has sunk our peasantry to ask them to 'plod on in sluggish misery from sire to son, from age to age,' until we, by force of party, shall free the country. It is playing the part of the Levite, who passed by the man plundered by thieves. It is seeing a helpless creature struggling against suffocation in a ditch, and making no immediate effort to save him. If we refuse to play the part of the Good Samaritan to those who have fallen among robber landlords, other Irishmen will not. The cry has gone forth, 'Down with the land system that has cursed and depopulated Ireland;' and this slogan cry of war will be taken up by the Constitutionalists.

"In the name of the common good of our country, its honour, interests, social and political, let the two great Irish parties agree to differ on party principles, while emulating each other in service to our impoverished people. Let each endeavour to find points upon which they can agree, instead of trying to dis-

cover quibbles whereon to differ. Let a centre-platform be adopted, resting on a broad, generous, and comprehensive Nationalism, which will invite every earnest Irishman upon it. The manhood-strength of Ireland could then become an irresistible power standing ready at its post, while the whole Irish race at its back, rallying to the support of such a platform, would cry—

“*We want the land that bore us !  
We'll make that want our chorus ;  
And we'll have it yet, tho' hard to get,  
By the heavens bending o'er us.*”

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## CHAPTER VII.

WHY THE FARMERS WERE NOT FENIANS—RADICAL REVOLUTIONISTS AND THE LAND QUESTION—THE “NEW DEPARTURE”—THE ABOLITION OF LANDLORDISM.

“*Wert thou all that I wish thee, great, glorious, and free,  
First flower of the earth, and first gem of the sea,—  
I might hail thee with prouder, with happier brow,  
But, oh ! could I love thee more deeply than now ?*”

MOORE.

IRELAND had long wasted her national strength by division of her people into parties, each striving its own way to do the most good for their common country, but each opposing the policy of the other. In the beginning of Fenianism, James Stephens refused co-operation from leading Irishmen of Constitutional principles, such as George Henry Moore, John Martin, and P. J. Smyth ; and later, the radical revolutionists refused to co-operate with the Home Rulers. “That there has been,” says Mr Davitt, in his lecture, “an unmethodical application of energies, or rather a reckless waste of Irish national strength in this long contest, is but too patent. We grasped at liberty,” he says, “in the intoxication of sincerity, and blindly discarded every practical consideration. We ‘resolved,’ and ‘swore,’ and ‘determined’ to avenge Ireland’s wrongs, but took no essential method to win her liberty. . . . We refused to shelter ourselves behind the walls of expediency, or to employ any of the justifiable means by which a weak people might utilise their strength, and we, therefore, marched into the open plain inviting destruction.”

The Irish farmers and land-holders, as a class, were not engaged in the Fenian movement, and it is well known that no Irish movement can succeed without the co-operation of this body. Why were not the farmers in the Fenian movement, or in the revolutionary organisation continued since that time? Mr Davitt shows that the Constitutionalists promised more to the farmer than the Revolutionists. The latter told him that when Ireland is free he would own his land; this appeared rather a far-off benefit, and for which he would have to risk life and property. The Constitutionalists said they would compel England to make land laws that would give him a right to his farm, and a means to bring up his children in a better manner; this appeared a more immediate benefit, and there was little risk in supporting an open agitation. A national movement, therefore, that would adopt a platform, broad, liberal, and comprehensive, on which all shades of political opinion could unite, and that would offer redress and security to the farmers, was much needed, and the Irish radical Revolutionists in America were the first to make the overtures which have been since crowned with almost unhopd-for success.

In the beginning, much opposition was given to the "New Departure," as it was called. The Dublin *Irishman* condemned the idea that patriots should vote for members of Parliament, and ridiculed the presence of a *Nationalist* in Westminster. The "Executive of the I.R.B.," or a body calling itself by that name—for most certainly it was not the "Supreme Council" of the I.R.B.—issued a manifesto condemning the "New Departure;" and James Stephens, who had recently arrived from Paris, in an interview with a reporter in New York in February, '79, on being asked whether the "New Departure" would not take the place of the Home Rule movement, and keep the Irish people's minds in the groove of constitutional agitation and action, replied: "Not at all; this 'New Departure' has failed. *It never could succeed.* The Home Rule movement sprung up after the defeat of the Fenian physical force movement at that time, and Nationalists joined it because, temporarily dispirited by this failure, they hoped such a movement might accomplish something. In this they have been wofully disappointed, and the fall of the Home Rule party rang the death knell of constitutional agitation among Irish Nationalists." Such has not proved to be the case, as subsequent events have shown.

Davitt showed the revolutionists the solid and sensible reasons why they should join in a constitutional attempt, by the

whole people, to achieve redress of wrongs which might by this means be attained, that the whole farming class of Ireland could be woke up to a proper patriotic feeling, and won over to the national cause.

Hitherto the demands of the Tenant Righters were mild and moderate. The Tenant League, in 1852, would have been satisfied with a settlement of the Land Question on a basis of fixity of tenure and fair rents. Now, however, the people were set thinking. The Nationalists, in their "New Departure," advanced a bold demand, embracing the abolition of landlordism, and the establishment of a peasant proprietary system in its place. Mr Parnell, himself a landlord, publicly expressed his conviction that such was the only possible satisfactory settlement of the Land Question, and Tenants' Defence Associations, Farmers' Clubs, and other bodies came forward with similar pronouncements. The farming classes of Ireland began to awake into new life; they saw something tangible and possible offered in the new programme. The opinions expressed in the "New Departure" movement began to take deep root, and develop into a powerful agitation, which was begun under the able management of Michael Davitt, in May, 1879, in the counties of Mayo, Galway, and Roscommon.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

HOW IRISH TENANT-FARMERS ARE GROUND DOWN BY THE LANDLORDS—  
WHY THE EXTREMISTS SHOULD AID THE LAND AGITATION—THE LAW  
OF PRIMOGENITURE EXPLAINED—THE ANCIENT IRISH LAW OF GAVEL—  
STATISTICS RELATING TO LAND AND LANDLORDS.

"Alas ! though feudal terror cease, thy children suffer still,  
And keener weapons than the sword are raised to waste and kill ;  
In vain the care-worn peasant's fate appeals to lordly pride ;  
The humble hopes that toil inspired are ruthlessly denied !"

REV. GEO. HILL.

THE fulcrum of Irish liberty is the Land Question. It is the prop on which must rest the lever that is to overturn British dominion in Ireland. Two-thirds of the population live on the land, and have no other means of existence. Ireland is bereft of manufactures and all other sources that might give employment to those who are driven from cultivation of the farms ; therefore the people must cling to their holdings, though they may be

rack-rented and subjected to a thousand petty tyrannies by their feudal taskmasters—the landlords. If they throw up their farms, nothing remains but the emigrant ship, the *chance* of a labourer's precarious wages in the towns, or possibly, as frequently happens, the poorhouse may be their doom; there is no more land to be hired, unless they happen to have plenty of money, and pay an exorbitant "fine" to a landlord to get it "over other tenants' heads."

The projectors of the Land League acted wisely in selecting this vital question as the issue for a new trial of strength with England. It proved a touchstone that at once called into action the entire nation, and enlisted the sympathies of the people; and the dullest can see—if they want to—that it is or can be made a means towards a great end. The condition of the Irish tenant-farmer since the substitution of an English feudal tenure for the Brehon tribal usages has been one of great suffering. They have been ground down to a serfdom that left them no choice but to bear it or starve. The Irish landlord has always exacted the last farthing which the land could yield after giving a miserable sustenance to the tiller, whose sweat brought the acres into fertility. He rarely ever considered or acknowledged that the tenant had rights in the soil—even when the latter, by unceasing and almost superhuman toil, cultivated the sterile waste, the mountain slope, or the bog, into a garden of productiveness. No! the tenant had no right, but the right to work and improve the land, so that the rent might be raised, and raised, until human or superhuman labour could wring no more from the soil; then, and only then, was the standard rent fixed by the Irish landlord. Was this ghoul-like absorption of the fruits of the toil of sweat and blood of the farmer the only grievance he had to bear from his taskmaster—almost owner? By no means: the landlord was the *law*; for whatever there was of it he administered. He was the magistrate, judge, and jury. He controlled the courts, the prisons, the grand jury, the poor-law boards. He was the watchful sentinel of hated British power in a subject country. "His Honour" was "the master," whom it would be a daring risk to displease or offend.

The Irish landlord had less consideration for his tenants than a Virginian planter had for his slaves. If the rent was not forthcoming, no matter if the crop failed or not; if a member of the tenant's family married contrary to the "rules of the estate;" if the tenant dared to vote for a member of Parliament contrary to his landlord's will; if a tenant killed game on the lands "preserved" for the landlord's pleasure, or if another offered over the

tenant's head and paid a "fine," or a larger rent, for the lands; if, in fact, he acted in any manner contrary to the pleasure of "His Honour," the landlord—out on the roadside went he and his family, to starve or die; and if any other tenant on the property offered shelter to the unfortunates, out he went also. The farmers and their families were reduced to absolute submission to the landowner's will: if they displeased him, the punishment was a terrible one.

From 1793 to 1829, during the existence of the Forty-shilling Freehold Act, which gave a voting power to tenants of that rating, the landlords granted leases for life of small patches of land to large numbers of the people, in order to create a voting power—the tenant being expected, of course, to vote at his landlord's beck; but, after the Act was abolished, the votes being lost, they swept the people and their families off the land; and from that time to the present the "Crowbar Brigade" has been busy at work depopulating the country. Why have we so many millions of our race scattered through the United States, Canada, the South American republics, Australia, Africa, *in England even*, and over the entire habitable globe? The Irish landlord can best answer the question. He has been a vulture whose talons clutched the throat of Irish industry, progressiveness, and liberty, strangling every attempt to keep pace with the progress of civilisation. It is time to shake off the foul parasite, and give humanity a chance to enjoy the fruits of the soil, which are produced by God's sunshine and man's sweat. The Irish tenant-farmer has been blamed for not being as ready as those living in the towns to join revolutionary movements. Who can blame him, when the facts we have mentioned are borne in mind? The landlord was watching him, and for his family's sake he kept aloof.

The first real step towards Irish liberty is the destruction of the power that keeps the people bound down, rendering them slaves to a class that really is the British garrison of Ireland. Loose the grip of Irish landlordism, destroy the influence it exercises over the masses, give freedom of action to the farming serf, and Britain will the sooner lose her hold on the entire nation.

The promoters of the Land League played for a great stake, and they have won it. They showed the tenants how to right their own wrongs without begging for legislation from a British Parliament, and, ere the crusade begun by Michael Davitt on the Mayo hills had had time fully to develop, the

British Ministry has been compelled to step in and offer terms of settlement to the tenant-farmers. The tillers of the soil were thoroughly aroused: when once shown the way towards emancipation, they sprang into life and action, and they were never so near independence as they are to-day. The words of Thomas Davis, in his admirable essay on Irish history, though written thirty-five years ago, are applicable to Ireland's position to-day. He says:—

“She is still a serf-nation; but she is struggling wisely and patiently, and is ready to struggle with all the energy her advisers think politic, for liberty. She has ceased to wail: she is beginning to make up a record of English crime and Irish suffering, in order to explain the past, to justify the present, and caution the future. She begins to study the past—not to acquire a beggar's eloquence in petition, but a hero's wrath in strife. She no longer tears and parades her wounds to win her smiter's mercy; and now she should look upon her breast and say, ‘That wound makes me distrust, and this makes me guard, and they all will make me steadier to resist, or, if all else fails, fiercer to avenge.’ Thus will Ireland do naturally and honourably. Our spirit has increased—our liberty is not far off.”

Charles Gavan Duffy, in his recent admirable book, “Young Ireland,” which should be read by every man and woman of Irish blood, says of the Irish landlord:—

“The condition of the two classes who live by agriculture furnished a singular contrast. The great proprietors were two or three hundred—the heirs of the undertakers, for the most part, and absentees; the mass of the country was owned by a couple of thousand others, who lived in splendour, and even profusion; and for these the peasant ploughed, sowed, tended, and reaped a harvest which he never shared. Rent in other countries means the surplus after the farmer has been liberally paid for his skill and labour; in Ireland it meant the whole produce of the soil except a potato-pit. If the farmer strove for more, his master knew how to bring him to speedy submission. He could carry away his implements of trade by the law of distress, or rob him of his sole pursuit in life by the law of eviction. He could, and habitually did, seize the stools and pots in his miserable cabin, the blanket that sheltered his children, the cow that gave them nourishment. . . . There was nowhere in Europe a propertied class who did so little for the people and

took so much from them. The productive power of an estate was often doubled and quadrupled by the industry of the farmers; and its rental rose accordingly. . . . Rents impossible to be paid were kept on the books of an estate, and arrears duly recorded to hold the tenant in perpetual subjection. For, in addition to his labour, the landlord required his vote, and various menial services. . . . The food of the peasant was potatoes, with a little milk or salt; flesh meat he rarely tasted, except when he went as a harvest labourer to England 'to earn the rent.'"

Since the great Emancipation and Repeal agitations carried on under the leadership of O'Connell, the tenant-farmers, as a class, had taken no active part in national affairs; the memories of the wholesale evictions, famine horrors, and scattering of millions of their race all over the world, seemed to produce a torpor from which it was hard to awake them into national life. Fifty years ago, when Ireland emerged from the dark shadow of the penal laws, four millions of the people could neither read nor write, and a million and a half more who could read a little could not write. England, by her atrociously vindictive and inhuman laws, succeeded in legislating the people into ignorance and wretchedness, the like of which never was known in any civilised country; but she did *not* and she *never will* succeed in breaking the spirit or pride of the race, or in destroying their determination to struggle perpetually until their complete national independence is won. They have never yet cried *peccavi*, or relinquished the fight for freedom. If beaten to-day, they will try again to-morrow, always remembering that

"Freedom's battle once begun,  
Bequeathed from bleeding sire to son,  
Though baffled oft is ever won."

After the Emancipation Act was passed, the schools were again opened; and since then the youth of Ireland have had some chance of opening and enlightening their minds, through that half-fledged system miscalled "national education." The Irish farmers to-day are intelligent, and quick to see, when pointed out to them, the best means of advancing their own condition and that of the whole country. It was time, therefore, for Davitt, and those who began the land agitation with him, to move. They did move, and soon swept aside those who in the beginning opposed the "New Departure." Yet there are many good and sincere Irishmen who, in their detestation of all parlia-



mentary agitation, refuse to participate in or countenance the Land League movement. Well, we cannot all be of the same mind; we should respect the opinions of others, when honest, as well as our own. Certainly, with the history before them of the failures of so many Constitutional attempts to redress Irish wrongs, and considering that out of the six hundred and fifty members which composed the House of Commons, Ireland has a representation of only one hundred and five members, who can be, and always have been, outvoted on questions relating to Ireland, it is only surprising that the number of prominent Irishmen who refuse aid to the present land movement is so inconsiderable. There is that, however, in the issue raised by the National Land League which appears potent enough to call for the support of all shades of Irish political opinion: and it is, that the question can be forced to a proper settlement *outside the legislature*, if the farmers are true to themselves and to the doctrine preached to them by the leaders of the movement; and, further, the farming classes are being reached and politically educated in a manner that could not be otherwise accomplished than through an open agitation; so that, however the Land Question may result, an immense amount of good will have been done in the destruction of the baleful power hitherto exercised by the landlord oligarchy, and in preparing the great mass of the people for sterner work.

Why should Irish Revolutionists—not prepared themselves to strike, and with their opportunity possibly afar off—be satisfied to stand idly by and witness famines decimating the country; the people leaving the shores in tens of thousands, perhaps never to return; in the year 1880 alone, the official returns say that nearly one hundred thousand persons emigrated, while those who remain are cowed and bowed down under a weight of misery almost unendurable. Better agitate, or do anything that will keep the people at home, improve their condition, and infuse a healthy national spirit into them, than look idly on, waiting for the hour of “England’s Difficulty,” while the life-blood of the nation is flowing away. This is practical patriotism of the right sort; the Revolutionary party saw and adopted it.

That the time has come for the settlement of the Irish land problem, we cannot doubt. We have the expression of some of the greatest thinking minds of the age, including political economists and British statesmen, in favour of justice being extended to the tiller of the soil—particularly in Ireland—in a

fair and equitable manner. John Stuart Mill, in his "Political Economy," says:—"The surplus is what the farmer *can afford* to pay as rent to the landlord; the rent, therefore, which any land will yield, is the *excess* of the produce. This . . . is one of the cardinal doctrines of 'political economy.'" And the following paragraph in favour of a peasant proprietary occurs in p. 201 of the same work:—

"The land of Ireland—the land of any country—belongs to the people of that country. The individuals called land-owners have no right, in morality and justice, to anything but the rent or compensation for its saleable value. When the inhabitants of a country quit the country *en masse*, because its government will not make it a place fit for them to live in, the government is judged and condemned. It is the duty of Parliament to reform the land tenure in Ireland. There is no necessity for depriving the landlords of one farthing of the pecuniary value of their legal rights; but justice requires that the actual cultivators should be enabled to become in Ireland, what they will become in America, proprietors of the soil which they cultivate."

He further says:—

"What has been epigrammatically said in the discussion on 'peculiar burdens,' is literally true when applied to them: that the greatest 'burden on land' is the landlords. Returning nothing to the soil, they consume its whole produce, *minus* the potatoes, strictly necessary to keep the inhabitants from dying of famine; and when they have any purpose of improvement, the preparatory step usually consists in not leaving even this pittance, but turning out the people to beggary, if not to starvation. When landed property has placed itself on this footing, it ceases to be defensible; and the time has come for making some new arrangement of the matter. When the 'sacredness of property' is talked of, it should always be remembered that any such sacredness does not belong in the same degree to landed property. NO MAN MADE THE LAND. It is the original inheritance of the whole species. Its appropriation is a question of general expediency. When private property in land is not expedient, it is unjust."

England's greatest statesmen have from time to time condemned the Irish land system, and scholars and writers have a million times cried shame on the country that alone, of all the

European kingdoms, continues to enforce and perpetuate a barbarous feudal land code, in the interest of a small minority, that grind and rob the millions of their God-given rights. Let us see what this "insolent prerogative" of primogeniture—as the historian Gibbon calls it—means, and contrast it with the law of *gavel*, which was the original law in vogue amongst the Irish before they fell under the blasting influence of British rule. Prior to the English invasion, the Irish people knew nothing of absolute ownership in land. The lands belonged to the clans: the chief merely held as trustee, or manager, for the sept; and, if by any act of his he became dispossessed, the rights of the people were in no way affected. The law of *gavel*, which emanated from the tribunal of Tara—an assembly of the rulers and learned men of the tribes throughout Ireland, which met triennially in the Parliament of Tara—obliged a rich parent at his death to divide his property, share and share alike, amongst his children. This system was the wisest and best that could be devised; for, as the population increased, each person had an equal share provided for him, which placed him above dependence on others. The subdivision of property among the masses was a security to the entire people. On the other hand, the tendency of the celebrated *baron law* of primogeniture—one of the curses that followed the English invasion into Ireland—is to make beggars and paupers of the masses of the people. This law was instituted in England in the eleventh century by William the Conqueror, and subsequently became the governing law of the landed property in Ireland acquired by the invaders through confiscation and plunder of the natives. The law of primogeniture prohibits the owners of estates from selling any portion of them, dividing them amongst children, or in any way disposing of them, except by the aristocracy-sustaining regulation which it prescribes, of compelling the parent at his death to bequeath the whole to his eldest son, to the exclusion of his other children. The canon of the common law touching descents which pertains to this subject is, that if a man dies seized of real estate of which he had the absolute ownership, without having made any disposition of it by his last will, the whole descends to his heir-at-law; and this heir-at-law is that one of his representatives who is the eldest male among those who are in the same degree of kindred. The tendency of primogeniture, therefore, is to keep the land in the possession of a few, who are powerless to dispose of it except as stipulated. They hold the estates for life, and, as too frequently happens, if the inheritor under this system be-

comes embarrassed through extravagance, dissipation, gambling, or any of the hundred landlord vices, not being able to sell any portion of the estate to satisfy his creditors, he screws the last farthing of rack-rent out of his unfortunate tenants. He will make his life-interest as profitable as he possibly can—no matter who suffers.

As most of the great Irish estates are inherited under the law of primogeniture and entail, it will be readily seen what misery is produced by that system when the owners are unscrupulous and unsympathetic with the masses of the people.

The entire of Ireland under land and water contains

a total in acres of - - - - -	20,819,947
Of this there is under water - - - - -	627,761
Giving a total acreage in land of - - - - -	20,192,186

This acreage is distributed as follows :—

Under towns, waste, bog, mountain, etc., - - -	4,153,854
Under plantation, - - - - -	324,990
Under tillage, - - - - -	5,642,057
Under pasture, - - - - -	10,071,285
	20,192,186

Now, let us see how the land of Ireland is divided among the people :—

Proprietors.		Acres.		Acres.
110	holding	20,000 and over,	own	4,151,142
192	"	20,000 to 10,000	"	2,607,719
440	"	10,000 " 5,000	"	3,071,471
1,246	"	5,000 " 2,000	"	3,872,611
1,773	"	2,000 " 1,000	"	2,474,756
2,633	"	1,000 " 500	"	1,871,171
2,271	"	500 " 300	"	884,493
1,916	"	300 " 200	"	471,646
2,788	"	200 " 100	"	408,699
2,082	"	100 " 50	"	152,004
1,460	"	50 " 25	"	52,804
2,377	"	under 25	"	29,056
19,288				20,047,572

The total government yearly valuation of this acreage for taxation purposes is £10,182,681. These 19,288 landed proprietors are classed as follows in the official returns:—

		Acres Represented,
Proprietors resident in Ireland, -	10,431	14,095,813
Absentee proprietors, . . . .	2,973	5,129,169
Public Companies in England, and Proprietary Institutions, - . .	161	584,327
Proprietors of under 100 acres, not classed, . . . . .	5,982	236,873
	<hr/> 19,547	<hr/> 20,046,182

The Census of 1871, which was the last taken—that of 1881 not being yet published—gives the total population of Ireland at that time as 5,412,377. The *estimated* population for 1879 is 5,299,209; a steady decrease shows itself in the returns each year.

It will be observed from the foregoing figures, that although Ireland is almost exclusively an agricultural country, in which about two-thirds of the population depend on the land for a living, yet only a little over one-fourth of the land is under tillage. The reason for this is the tendency of late by the landlords to create large grazing farms, and their prohibition in leases and agreements against tenants "breaking the land" for agricultural purposes. In carrying out the programme of the amalgamation of small farms into large stock-raising pastures, the landlords have swept away, in a wholesale manner, tens of thousands of families from the land, and depopulated whole villages to such an extent, that in many parts of the country it is difficult to get sufficient help in the spring and autumn to work the portion of the land which is under cultivation. The object clearly was to get rid of the people and supply their places with cattle, it being easier to collect the rents from a few large stock-raisers than from numerous tenants with large families depending for support on the wretched pittance left after paying rack-rent and taxes. The extreme poverty and dependence of the masses can be seen at a glance through the figures giving the number of landed monopolists: 110 persons own one-fifth of the whole country, or over four millions of acres; 192 persons own over two and a half millions of acres; 440 own over three millions of acres; 1246 own nearly four millions of acres. The total of

these few figures shows that nearly fourteen millions of acres are owned absolutely by 1878 individuals, while nearly four and a half millions more are owned by 4406 persons; this gives an ownership of over eighteen millions of acres to 6284 landed proprietors. Of these large land-owners, 2973 are absentees, who hold over one-fourth of the entire Island, or five million one hundred and twenty-nine thousand one hundred and sixty-seven acres, and who rarely—if ever—visit their properties. For the millions of pounds in rack-rents which they screw from the farmers, not one cent ever goes back to be expended in Ireland.

From our analysis of these official figures, it can be seen that any hope of progress or prosperity in Ireland depends entirely on the destruction of the law of primogeniture and entail; the taking of the lands from the few aristocrats that hold them by law, who have been a curse and a blight for centuries on one of the fairest and most productive countries on the globe; and the creation of a peasant proprietary. "NO MAN MADE THE LAND." It was made by God for the people, and the people should own the soil they till and enrich by their sweat and labour.

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## CHAPTER IX.

**DAVITT'S RETURN TO IRELAND—THE AGITATION BEGUN IN MAYO—DEATH OF ISAAC BUTT—PRONOUNCEMENTS BY THE CATHOLIC CLERGY—FAMINE CLOUDS APPEAR ON THE HORIZON—ARCHBISHOP MACHALE CONDEMNS THE LEADERS OF THE AGITATION—MICHAEL DAVITT'S REPLY.**

"The West's asleep, the West's asleep;  
 Alas! and well may Erin weep  
 That Connaught lies in slumber deep.  
 But hark! some voice like thunder spake:  
 'The West's awake! the West's awake!'"

THOMAS DAVIS.

MICHAEL DAVITT returned to Ireland from the United States in the latter part of December, 1879, and ere many months had elapsed, the Land League and anti-rent banner was flung to the breeze in Mayo. He spent the first few months after his arrival in arranging his plans, and organising for the great meetings which immediately followed. On Sunday, April 20, the first monster meeting of the tenant-farmers of Mayo, Galway, and Roscommon, was held on a plain within a few miles of Claremorris. It numbered from 15,000 to 20,000 people, and was

considered the greatest ever held in the province of Connaught. Five hundred horsemen, wearing green emblems, were present. The land and rent question was ably discussed by John Ferguson, of Glasgow, who uttered doctrines probably proclaimed for the first time from an Irish political platform. He declared "that the land did not belong to the landlords; it belonged to the whole community. The landlords were simply land stewards for the State. For more than 200 years they had appropriated the State property to their private purposes. They had cast the burden of taxation, which the land originally bore, upon the shoulders of the people. It was now the duty of the industrious bees in the community to get rid of the drones. The Continental nations had done it, and the British Empire must either release industry from taxation or be beaten in production by nations which had done it. It was the peasant's duty to live, to cultivate, to pay the labourer, to pay the shopkeeper, and then, having discharged these conditions, without which production of wealth from the soil could not go on, he might pay a fair rent to the landlord so long as the State was foolish enough to allow that individual the privilege of appropriating that portion of the national revenue which in ancient days supported the State, which was now called rent, and used by men who did no duty to society, and who were simply an incubus on the community. He sustained his position by quotations from Stuart Mill and Cliffe Leslie, and called upon the people to never rest until feudal landlordism, an artificial existence, was swept away by the repeal of those feudal laws which gave it life, and which prevented the land decomposing out of big estates by ordinary commercial law into the hands of those who would use it commercially, that is to say, productively, and thereby serve the interests of the greatest number, which was the end of all law and Government." Thomas Brennan, J. J. Loudon, of Westport, and other speakers of ability, addressed the meeting on the grievances under which the tenant-farmers laboured, and resolutions pledging those present to the cause of land-law reform were adopted.

At this time the distress caused by three years of bad harvests was beginning to make itself felt among the small farmers, and the land-owning cormorants were beginning to swoop down on their prey. At the Quarter Sessions held in Swineford in April, '79, fifty-four ejectment decrees were granted for non-payment of rent, only one year's rent in each case being due.

The Dublin *Freeman's Journal*, in the beginning of May,

alluding to the distress then manifesting itself throughout the country, said: "Scarcely a day passes which does not bring new proof of the magnitude of the distress which has overtaken the agricultural classes throughout the country. At all the recent meetings of the Farmers' Clubs this was the most absorbing topic of conversation, and numerous private letters confirm the melancholy tale. At no period since the famine years has anything like the present collapse been felt. The distress is not confined to a district or a county: it is general and searching. It has already plunged countless families into difficulties little short of ruin—difficulties which, in many cases, it will cost many years of prosperity to recover. We have it on the most indisputable authority that the farming classes throughout the country have had in numberless cases to plunge heavily into debt to keep themselves afloat, the rent in many cases having been met by the ruinous means of bills and loans."

The agitation, therefore, began just in time to counteract the terrible effects of the famine, which became general throughout the West the following autumn and winter; and also to interpose between the landlords and their intended victims. How well each was done we know to-day.

An event of much importance, although not of any considerable bearing on the future of the new land movement, as the people had already decided in its favour, occurred on May 5th. On that day Isaac Butt, the leader of the Home-Rule party, died in Dublin. Mr Butt—according to his lights—did noble work for his country, and his memory will ever be revered, as it deserves to be, by his fellow-countrymen. From being a staunch supporter of Protestantism and British ascendancy, and a vehement champion of ultra-Orangeism and Kentish fire, he became an earnest pleader of the people's rights, and an exposé of the grievances of his down-trodden country. He subsequently was chosen leader of the popular cause in Parliament, to which he honestly devoted his great talents. Butt's conversion from rabid pro-Britonism was sudden and singular. It came to pass in this wise: At one time, when "travelling from Cork to Dublin, he met, at the Limerick Junction, a large band of emigrants, and witnessing, until he was touched to tears, the agony with which their hearts were thrilled at leaving the land they loved so fondly, the thought came to him that there must be something fatally wrong in that Government which would thus compel a people to leave a country, rich in resources, lying undeveloped and waste. Out of this thought grew another, until he was covered with



them as with so many green boughs, under which sprang up the national faith, and he took up the cause of 'Home Rule' and proclaimed it. With what excellent judgment he directed that cause, and with what zeal and sacrifice, and with, considering the circumstances, what success he toiled and worked and spoke for it, history will record."

As the movement in Mayo progressed—meetings being held each Sunday in the various parishes—the Catholic clergy were not long in coming to the aid of the people, as the following declarations will show. In May, at the monthly conference of the clergy of the Deanery of Tralee, County Kerry, the following resolution was adopted :—

"We, the Catholic clergy of the Tralee Deanery, in this trying season of agricultural distress, deem it our duty before we separate to record our solemn and deliberate opinion that the present year is the most disastrous the tenant-farmers of Kerry have seen since the calamitous famine years of 1847 and 1848. The prevailing distress we believe to be owing principally to the following causes :—In the first place, to the excessive rents for the last twenty years. There has been very generally a steady increase of rents, that were already high enough, until they have been advanced to 50 or 100 per cent. ; in some cases, even much over the poor-law valuation. These exorbitant rents the tenants have struggled to pay as long as prices kept up and harvests proved favourable. But now that the prices of all kinds of agricultural produce have fallen 20 per cent., they find it utterly impossible to meet the extravagant rents they were heretofore obliged to pay—rents which we believe to be higher than in any other part of Ireland.

"Again, we have had several bad harvests. The last harvest, particularly, was one of the worst we have had for a long time. The potato crop all but failed, and what remained was not fit for human food ; while oats was the worst crop farmers had for years, being as much, or more, chaff than grain. When we add to this that the wages of farm servants and labourers, and the expense of their support, have trebled for the last few years, we can form a fair idea of the difficulties with which agriculturists have to contend ; while the extraordinary severity of the last winter and spring, and which is felt even in this first week of June, has reduced farming stock to a very low condition, and leaves very little hope of the coming season proving a prosperous one. But it may be said that the present

depression is only temporary, and that a good harvest or two will restore matters to their former equilibrium. We fear not; because we apprehend that some, at least, of the causes are of a permanent character. We may hope, through God's mercy, for favourable seasons and good harvests; but we cannot hope that the competition of foreign producers on the Continents of both Europe and America will cease or become less active. On the contrary, we regard that competition as only in its commencement. The English markets are as near to French, Belgian, or Dutch products as to us, or nearer; while steam navigation has brought the vast Continent of America, with its free lands and light taxation, within eight days' sail of our shores. We, therefore, ask how it will be possible for our tenant-farmers, overburdened as they are with excessive rents, heavy taxation, and high farm wages, to compete successfully with their more-favoured foreign competitors? Plain common sense will tell us that the thing is impossible, and, therefore, we may not expect to see again the high prices that have been obtained for the last few years. Now, if this state of things continues, the tenant-farmers of Ireland must of necessity go to the wall. Bankruptcy and ruin will speedily overtake them, and the country will be reduced to as bad a condition of things as that of the famine times. The landlords have the salvation of the country in their hands. While times were prosperous, the tenants punctually and satisfactorily paid their rents; and now that the times are adverse, we, the clergy of the people, most respectfully and earnestly implore the landlords to come to the relief of their suffering tenantry, and make such just and reasonable reductions in the rents as will enable the people to hold their ground, notwithstanding bad harvests, heavy taxation, high wages, and foreign competition."

This was followed by like declarations from the Deaneries of Killaloe, Dungarvan, Cahirciveen, Achonry, and Ossory, and later from many others.

During the early stages of the agitation, the British Parliament, as was usual with them, refused to pay any attention to the appeals for justice of the Irish members. So glaring was this, that, on the night of June 26, 1879, John Bright caused quite a scene in the House of Commons by a speech in which he defended the conduct of the Irish members in obstructing the business of the House in order to compel attention to their demands. The Irish members in Parliament, he said, formed

only an insignificant numerical minority in the House, and there were only two methods possible for them to obtain what the majority was disposed to refuse. One of these methods was to sell themselves to one of the two English parties, and thus give to the purchaser the balance of power. The other was to exercise their Parliamentary rights, and, by the obstruction of business under the forms of the House, to compel the majority to make concessions to them.

That the land movement, now well under way, never for a moment lost sight of the main question of Irish liberty, will be seen from the following:—On Sunday, June 15th, a great land demonstration took place at Milltown, County Galway, at which 14,000 people were present. The first resolution, which was proposed by Mr Thomas Brennan, was:—

“That, as the people of Ireland have never ceased to demand their right of self-government, we hereby reiterate our resolution to labour for the same until our country has secured its attainment.”

In speaking to the resolution, Mr Brennan said:—

“The speech of the day—the most eloquent and significant speech—was not anything that would be said from that platform: but it was the tramp of the mighty multitude of earnest and determined men whom they saw marching there that day. When he saw that magnificent meeting, and saw their bold brows and hopeful faces, he thanked God that they were no longer slumbering slaves. Their presence there, notwithstanding landlords’ frowns and agents’ threats, proved that they knew their rights, and were determined to insist upon them. They met that day to declare the right of their country to national independence, and he believed that it was only in an Irish Senate their right to the ownership in the land would be recognised.”

The farmers’ clubs throughout the country also fell into line, and by resolutions supported the movement, until they were finally absorbed in the local branches of the Land League. The farmers of the West were now fairly roused to a sense of their condition; and their determination to resist rack-rents and eviction was decided.

The language used at meetings was moderate, yet at the same time bold and determined. Six months previously no one would have dared to use it. The land movement was only a few

months begun, and this was the sort of fruit it was already bearing. The dark clouds of famine were beginning to be seen on the horizon in the summer of 1879. The condition of the farming districts was fast becoming alarming. A correspondent of a leading American newspaper, who had been through the country, raised the following note of alarm in a communication from Ireland to his paper, written in July. He said :—

“ Those who can recall the fearful scenes of misery and destitution which prevailed in this country during the years 1847-48, rendered remarkable by the failure of the potato crop, are not unlikely to witness a period almost as trying. A succession of bad seasons, extravagant rents, which are not only demanded, but wrenched from the unfortunate tenantry at the point of the bayonet, and lowering prices on account of the vast increase in the importation of all edible commodities, have reduced the condition of the farming classes to a state bordering on bankruptcy, while the depression felt by the agricultural community has spread, and continues to expand, over all grades among the industrial classes.

“ Dark clouds, indeed, hover over the land ; and in many places they have descended, bringing starvation and positive ruin wherever they have fallen. Factories are closing *in toto*, the banks refuse to advance money except when unexceptionable security is forthcoming, and, although some landlords are returning from ten to twenty-five per cent. of the rents, the vast majority must have their ‘ pound of flesh ;’ and thus there is every prospect of the country drifting into a state worse than what decimated it in the famine years already alluded to. Misery in its chrysalis condition only has as yet made its hideous appearance in Ulster and Leinster ; but the western portion of Munster, and the entire province of Connaught, have already bowed down under the awful visitation.

“ From inquiries which I have personally instituted in Mayo and Sligo, I can assert that, in these counties, the farming classes are on the threshold of the workhouse. Unprofitable seasons have, as I have said, led to this ; but there is a contributory cause, and this is the system of credit which traders allowed, and which made the population anything but thrifty ; and now that dark days have arrived, their energies are paralysed, and efforts in any direction appear unavailing. That districts not as yet included in the scope on which desolation has come, must, in a short time, feel the terrible depression, is certain, unless

Providence interposes. Within twelve months Leinster farmers have had their rents increased by more than twenty per cent, and, with fully thirty per cent. of a decrease in the value of all produce, their position can be easily understood. Ireland's oldest duke, the head of the Geraldines, has led the way; and, just as the prospect of bad times had become assured, his representatives set to work to increase his rent-roll, the process being, in many cases, repeated in the short space of a dozen years. Agreements, commonly called leases, were issued, only to make the heel of oppression the more keenly felt, as clauses, rendered legal by an abortive Land Act, were introduced to cripple the tenantry, and oust them from any claims which the most stupid enactment in the British statute-book contains. Rents are still forthcoming on some places; but in the counties which I have named above, Sligo and Mayo, the landlords have, in many instances, not a penny to receive. Their own cruel misrule has turned on themselves, and, by impoverishing those by whom they had to live, they at last feel the biting of want.

"Not a week ago an agent informed me that on the day he appointed for collection of rents he had not received a cent., nor does he see any prospect of payment. Monster meetings occur weekly, at which the people declare that they are willing and would have no difficulty to pay fair terms for their holdings. Of course the landocracy hold aloof; but how long they can afford to do so remains to be seen. In the course of one year eight hundred ejectments have been served in Mayo alone; so that, taking the small average of six to each family, we would have 4800 persons in this county, alone, houseless—cast on the wide world, with no other shelter in their own land save that afforded by the unions. On Sunday, the 29th of June, I attended a public meeting at Castlebar, which was promoted for the purpose of calling attention to the threatened evictions on the estate of Miss Crean Lynch; and on that occasion a Mr Daly, in speaking of the state of the district, said he challenged any commissioner from Dublin Castle, or elsewhere, to find within the walls of many of the people who are to be evicted 'a second animal,' barring a cat, and in some cases he was aware that there was not sufficient food for the rat-watcher without pinching the supply of some member of the family.

"But it is useless to pursue this strain. It is patent to every one that the owners of property must either reduce their rents or take the land on their own hands. They are not likely to adopt the latter course, and may err in postponing the former

until it becomes too late. The importation of cattle and sheep weighs heavily on prices of beef and mutton; but, at the same time, if it were not for the supplies from America and Spain, meat would be a luxury only within the reach of the moneyed classes."

In addition to the foregoing communication, the following spirited address, signed by the priests and people of Connemara, and issued at Clifden, County Galway, July 2, will give an insight into the state of public feeling then existing:—

"No place has felt more than Clifden the neglect of successive governments, and, in general, the rigorous treatment by the landlords of the poor, industrious tenants. We are bound to explain to the public how it has happened that a monster meeting of the entire population of Connemara has been deferred to another day. The accident of the parade of military suggested the prudence of contenting ourselves at present with a smaller medium of proclaiming to the world and to the empire at large the wrongs and the wants of as pious, as patriotic, and as peaceable a population as can be found anywhere. A public meeting was fixed for this day, and the streams of people entering by all the approaches to town gave abundant evidence that the meeting would be a monster one; but the Government poured into our neighbourhood and the town a *posse* of police, who, it appears, were sent to fight a foe that proved imaginary.

"We, the clergy and the people of Connemara, proclaim to the world that, as long as landlord injustice and ill-treatment from one class and utter neglect by the governing classes shall continue, there will not, and ought not, to be any chance of popular contentment nor of permanent peace. To heighten the bitter results arising from the manifold sources of misery here in Connemara, a new phase of anti-Catholic and anti-Irish ascendancy is evidenced in the unquestionable partiality of what are called the upper classes, and their leaning to as vile and as detestable a system as curses any district under the sun. We allude to the troops of proselytising vagabonds, who forfeit by their blasphemies and misconduct anything like good neighbourhood from the inhabitants of any district cursed by their presence. We do hereby, in conclusion, and without the parade of braggadocio, proclaim to all whom it may concern, we shall continue to agitate until the order of death by starvation and the slow process of hunger shall have vanished, and until death by eviction and extermination shall be drawn from within the right which land-

lords enjoy ; that is, of perpetuating the hideous crime of murder by rack-rent and extermination.

"The Rev. Dean M<sup>c</sup>Manus, P.P., V.G., Clifden ; the Rev. B. M<sup>c</sup>Andrew, P.P., Ballinakill ; the Rev. Joseph J. R. Moloney, P.P., Roundstone ; the Rev. Patrick Grealy, P.P., Carna ; the Rev. Michael O<sup>c</sup>Connell, C.C., Ballinakill ; the Rev. W. Rhatigan, C.C., Clifden ; the Rev. John J. Healy, C.A., Boffin ; the Rev. J. Connolly, C.C., Roundstone ; the Rev. T. Flannery, C.C., Clifden ; the Rev. P. Colgan, C.C., Carna ; Messrs Peter John King (Honourable Secretary), John P. Darcy, Cornelius King, Joseph Gorham, Kennedy O'Brien, John M. Lyden, John J. Lyden, Michael Lyden, William Casey, James Casey, Fenton Kavanagh."

The Tory Government, up to this, affected to ignore the reports of distress and impending famine, and sought, as pointed out in the address from the Connemara clergy, to intimidate the land meetings.

In the House of Commons, on the 26th of June, Mr O'Connor Power asked the Chief Secretary for Ireland if he would inform the House on what authority he had formed his belief that the persons who took part in a recent tenant-right meeting at Milltown, in the County of Galway, "were not tenant-farmers, and were unconnected with the neighbourhood ;" and whether he would lay upon the table of the House copies of the instructions given to Colonel Bruce, Deputy Inspector-General of Constabulary, and the constabulary authorities in the West of Ireland, in reference to the land agitation going on in that part of the country, so as to enable the House to express an opinion on the subject. Mr Power said that "the agitation in Ireland was a grave one, which the Government were bound to notice ; but when the people asked for bread, and the Government answered their appeal with bullets, they would be held responsible for the peace of the country. The Government were willing to be guided by the opinions of the clergy in reference to the maintenance of order, but not with respect to the grievances of Ireland. He hoped the Chief Secretary would be warned to be more careful in the future as to the sources of his information. If the instructions asked for had reference to something being done in Zululand, the refusal to produce them would have been regarded as an arbitrary proceeding, which the House would not have tolerated. The people of Ireland had never had to deal with a more hateful power than that of the Conservative party and Government. They proposed to deal with the land question by shooting the

people down. An extra police force, the cost of which was levied on the district, was the remedy of the Conservative party for the redress of Irish grievances. He moved the adjournment of the House."

Mr Parnell rose and seconded the motion, and said—"The circumstances of the people of Ireland were so desperate that matters could not be allowed to go further without the subject being brought before the House. The Government had quartered a large force of constabulary on a people so distressed that they could not pay their rents."

Mr Mitchell Henry said—"He could bear his own testimony to the wretched condition of the people in the West of Ireland, and the Minister should think less of winning the cheers of his followers, and more of the extreme misery existing in the country with which he was officially connected."

During the early part of the agitation, Davitt had many obstacles to contend against and overcome; this he was enabled to do from the absolute confidence which the masses of the people had in his honour and tried patriotism. In July, '79, he found it necessary to defend himself against an aspersion from the great and good "Lion of the Fold," the Archbishop of Tuam. The Archbishop was suspicious of the leaders of the new movement, and no wonder, having so often seen the people and their cause betrayed by blatant politicians, who crept into Government positions on the shoulders of popular agitations. But the noble sentinel of Irish honour and freedom did not then know the men who were leading the new land movement. We believe no person would be readier now to do them justice than John of Tuam—if occasion demanded it. On June the 5th, the following letter from the Archbishop appeared in the *Freeman's Journal*:—

"DEAR SIR,—In a telegraphic message, exhibited towards the end of last week in a public room of this town, an Irish member of Parliament has unwittingly expressed his readiness to attend a meeting convened in a mysterious and disorderly manner, which is to be held, it seems, in Westport, on Sunday next. Of the sympathy of the Catholic clergy for the rack-rented tenantry of Ireland, and of their willingness to co-operate earnestly in redressing their grievances, abundant evidence exists in historic Mayo, as elsewhere. But night patrolling, acts and words of menace, with arms in hand, the profanation of what is most sacred in religion—all the result of lawless and occult association—eminently merit the solemn



condemnation of the ministers of religion, as directly tending to impiety and disorder in church and in society. Against such combinations in this diocese, organised by a few designing men, who, instead of the well-being of the community, seek only to promote their personal interests, the faithful clergy will not fail to raise their warning voices, and to point out to the people that unhallowed combinations lead invariably to disaster and to the firmer riveting of the chains by which we are unhappily bound as a subordinate people to a dominant race. I remain, dear sir, faithfully yours,

“JOHN, *Archbishop of Tuam.*”

Again, in July 7, another letter, addressed to Michael O'Donohue, C.C., M. J. Fitzgerald, P. Flanagan, Martin Curran, and Thomas Kelly, honorary secretaries of a large meeting of tenant-farmers, held in Ballyhaunis, was printed in the same newspaper. It was as follows:—

“*St JARLATH'S, TUAM, July 7, 1879.*

“GENTLEMEN,—I beg leave to return my warmest acknowledgment to your committee for their kind invitation to attend the great meeting to be held in Ballyhaunis on the 10th of August.

“The rooting of the people in the soil of their own country, on equitable terms, is a question that must engage the earliest and earnest attention of the Legislature, as a measure essential to the peace and happiness of Ireland. Next to a repeal of the disastrous Union between Great Britain and Ireland, without which the condition of this country will ever be that of a nation trampled under foot for the welfare of a people of another land, beneficent legislation, defining the just rights of the landlords and tenants, is the measure dearest to the hearts of the people, the solution of which cannot be much longer deferred.

“Let the tenant-farmers of Mayo, as of all Ireland, act judiciously: let them be guided, as of old, by their faithful allies, the priests; who, as a body, in good report and in evil report, stood in the front ranks of the combat, sacrificing time and personal interests to the public welfare, with no other object in view but that of shielding the weaker members of society against the violence of their inveterate foes.

“The patriotic spirit that at all times animated the breasts of both priests and people in Mayo, is as vigorous to-day, and as free from baneful elements, as when they fought constitu-

tionally against the insignificant *shooneens* and the powerful oligarchy of the country.

"Let no attempt at dissevering so sacred a union, fraught with blessings to the people, be tolerated.

"In some parts of the country the people, in calmer moments, will not fail to be astonished at the circumstance of finding themselves at the tail of a few unknown, strolling men, who, with affected grief, deploring the condition of the tenantry, seek only to mount to place and preferment on the shoulders of the people; and, should they succeed in their ambitious designs, they would not hesitate to shake aside at once the instrument of their advancement as an unprofitable incumbrance.

"I am glad to find, among the gentlemen invited to the meeting, the names of the patriotic proprietor of the *Freeman's Journal*, of the two universally respected members of the County Galway, and of the faithful Mr Biggar. I miss one name from the list—a name that sheds lustre on a country no less famed for the oratory than for the seasonable courage of her sons—namely, Mr A. M. Sullivan, M.P.

"I remain, gentlemen, faithfully yours,

"JOHN, *Archbishop of Tuam.*"

To this letter Mr Davitt found it necessary to reply; and published the following respectful but manly answer:—

"DUBLIN, July 10, 1879.

"To the Editor of the *Dublin Freeman*,—There are few men to be found among our seemingly destiny-divided people who would not prefer to lie under an unmerited rebuke, or remain silent to even uncalled-for aspersions upon their motives or actions, rather than utter a single word in defence which might irritate or offend the venerated Archbishop of Tuam. But censure from one who is looked upon as the patriarch of his race is the more heavy from the certainty of its acceptance from the millions who love to call him such, as being deserved, and unbearable from a consciousness of its not being earned, in face of assertions, which, if left uncontradicted, would carry conviction to the contrary to almost every Irishman's mind. Under these circumstances, and with nothing but respect for his personal worth and veneration for his years, I feel compelled to defend myself against the (to me) serious imputations contained in the following portion of his Grace's letter in this day's *Freeman*:—

"In some parts of the country the people, in calmer moments,

will not fail to be astonished at the circumstance of finding themselves at the tail of a few unknown, strolling men, who, with affected grief, deploring the condition of the tenantry, seek only to mount to place and preferment on the shoulders of the people; and, should they succeed in their ambitious designs, they would not hesitate to shake aside at once the instrument of their advancement as an unprofitable incumbrance.'

"As one who has taken part in the meetings to which his Grace refers, I beg respectfully to say that I am neither a strolling nor an unknown man in the West, but one who works for his daily bread, and who is known in Mayo, my native county, where my relatives are now, in common with others, experiencing the severity of the times, and a want of that assistance in the struggle of life which a beneficial change in the land laws of Ireland would afford them. Some twenty-five years ago my father was ejected from a small holding near the parish of Straed, in Mayo, because unable to pay a rent which the crippled state of his resources, after struggling through the famine years, rendered impossible. Trials and sufferings in exile for a quarter of a century, in which I became physically disabled for life, a father's grave dug beneath American soil, myself the only member of my family ever destined to live or die in Ireland, and this privilege existing only by virtue of 'ticket-of-leave,' are the consequence which followed that eviction. If all this but entitles me to an imputation of affected grief at the condition of the families of my kindred and others who are threatened with a fate similar to mine, I can only regret that fortune has not placed me in such a position in life where the mere knowledge of the miserable condition of the tenantry of Ireland, without undergoing its bitter, heart-crushing experiences, would entitle me to the credit of unaffected grief at the mendicant existence which an inhuman Government and heartless land system inflicts upon our people. Men who merit the additional imputations of seeking only to mount to place or preferment upon the shoulders of the people, invariably ambition either to enter Parliament by their aid, or patriotically dispose of themselves to the Government for anti-national services.

"So far as the first of these ambitious designs is concerned, I am not qualified for its perpetration for two reasons: one being that, as I have been a 'treason felon,' I could not, on that account, sit in the 'first assembly of gentlemen in Europe;' and the second, but most particular one, is that, even if the

foregoing disqualification were removed, I would never consent to misrepresent the aspirations of the Irish people in an English Parliament after representing my country's right to independence in England's prisons. As for any other advancement on the people's shoulders, the only one I am likely to obtain by their patronage will be in the direction of oakum-picking in Millbank, or stone-breaking in Dartmoor Convict Prison; preferments which, with their indignities and suffering, I am in a fair way of being convinced, are more easily borne than the imputations, insults, and injuries which the participant in Irish politics receives for his endeavours. Yours, etc.,

"MICHAEL DAVITT,"

## CHAPTER X.

THE LANDLORDS REFUSE TO LOWER THE RENTS—THE AGITATORS DEMAND THE ABOLITION OF LANDLORDISM—REPEAL OF THE IRISH CONVENTION ACT—THE FIRST NATIONAL CONVENTION HELD IN MAYO TO FORM A LAND LEAGUE—APPEAL TO IRISH-AMERICANS—MANIFESTO OF THE TRUSTEES OF THE IRISH NATIONAL FUND.

"Abject tears and prayers submissive,—  
Have they eyes and cannot see?  
Never country gained her freedom  
When she sued on bended knee."

LADY WILDE.

NOTWITHSTANDING the public and private appeals made to the landlords for reductions of the rack-rents exacted from the people, very few of them responded; instead of doing so, they cried out for coercion and their full "pound of flesh." Numbers of English and Scotch land-owners had reduced their rents, owing to the low prices received by the farmers for home produce, in consequence of the great quantities of provisions daily imported from America. Not so with the Irish landlords; they met the popular cry for low rents in a different manner. At the Summer Assizes in Mayo, held about the end of July, the grand jury—all of whom are landlords—passed the following resolution:—

"Resolved, That the judge of the assize having, in his charge to us, spoken in the strongest terms of the state of this county, we feel it our duty, before separating, to call the attention of

the Government to the unsettled state of the county, and to the serious agitation against the payment of rents without regard to the rate or time at which the lands were let, or to the other circumstances connected therewith. This illegal design is pursued by a system of wholesale intimidation by words and acts of menace, and by violent speeches, exciting the people to outrages against both landlords and tenants. We think these evils cannot be effectually removed without additional powers being conferred on the executive by Parliament. Our foreman is requested to forward copies of this resolution to the Chief Secretary for Ireland, and to the Lieutenant for the county, the Earl of Lucan. Passed unanimously.—(Signed) J. T. BROWNE, *Foreman*."

Such a response as this, and others like it, acted as a spur to the agitation; so that the demands made from the public platforms at the great meetings became sterner and more exacting. At a meeting of the priests and people, held in Claremorris on July 13, in response to a resolution demanding that the weight of the agricultural depression should be borne equally by the landlords and the tenants, Mr Davitt said:—

"They were assembled to advocate every plank of the platform laid down at the Irishtown, Westport, and Milltown meetings. Canon Bourke had given them very excellent advice when he told them to deport themselves as men who were entitled to their freedom. He [the speaker], though he went further in Irish politics than Canon Bourke, did not wish to add a word to that. They had been told that inflammatory language had been used at previous meetings; but he asked the Government to point to any outrages that had resulted from it. They had been called 'Communists,' and 'Fenians,' because they asked the right to live in Ireland; but they might retaliate, and ask what right landlords have to the soil, and they would find it very difficult to get convincing proofs from Lord Sligo, Lord Lucan, Sir Roger Palmer, or Lord Oranmore. They had been up to this too moderate. They had simply asked for a reduction of rents which it was utterly impossible for them to pay. John Stuart Mill said rent was the surplus of the profits that came from the tenant's industry and outlay in tilling the soil. Where was this surplus of profits in Ireland to-day? In face of the depreciation of produce and large importations from America, he did not say they were justified in paying no rent at all; but he did not say that a time might not

come when they would have to make a protest as a nation against paying salary, in the form of rent, to a caste in Ireland that were fulfilling the duties of a landlord garrison. The old cry of 'Fixity of tenure at fair rents' would do no longer. They must tell the English Legislature that the concession they gave would be taken as instalments only of their just demands, and they must not be satisfied with their representatives unless they supported the full demand, that the soil of Ireland should be returned to the people of Ireland. Mr Lowther had tried to cast a stigma on his character by describing him as a 'ticket-of-leave man;' but as long as chief secretaries had only insults to offer to Irish demands, and as long as the juggling legislation of Lord Beaconsfield could even make a subject of play of the hierarchy of Ireland, so long would 'ticket-of-leave men' for political offences be cherished in Irish hearts. They must organise their strength openly and above-board. There was no necessity for occult meetings; but there was a necessity for determined organisations, and a double necessity that organisation should be utilised judiciously and effectually, in order to break down the structure of landlordism which had cursed and depopulated Ireland, until they bequeathed an emancipated soil to their children, and a regenerated Ireland to posterity."

And again, at a great land meeting held in Shrule on Sunday, July 27, Mr Davitt proposed the following resolution:—

"That, as our country has never forfeited the right to be mistress of her own destinies, nor abandoned her resolve to struggle for the recovery of the proud prerogative of a nation, we hereby declare self-government to be the inalienable right of Ireland."

In speaking in its support, he delivered a spirited address, in which he said:—

"This successful *exposé* of the inhuman land system by which Ireland is cursed and her people impoverished, is both encouraging and hopeful, and must be persevered in until the public opinion of the civilised world shall seize landlordism by the throat and compel it to disgorge the plundered heritage of a suffering people. A reduction of rents may tide you over the present crisis, and procure you a little relief from an epidemic form of the land evil; but what the prosperity of your country and the social amelioration of yourselves and chil-

dren demand is a remedy for the evil itself, a total eradication of a chronic malady which has eaten to the very vitals of Ireland, paralysed her energies, and condemned her people to almost perpetual destitution. The principle of sacrificing private interests to the good of the masses, and establishing government on the basis of the people, is that which enlightened statesmanship has always propounded as a preventive to revolution, or even acted upon in obedience to the growing necessities of an awakening civilisation. Such a principle has been acted upon in Ireland, to some extent at least. Such a change as making the tiller of the soil secure thereon has been effected in most Continental countries, with results so satisfactory to the people and government that there will never be a feudal system again tolerated by, or forced upon, those who have been freed from its accursed tyranny.

“Name the institution which the lords of the soil have raised in this country for the moral and intellectual elevation of the people. What encouragement is given to the social progress of Ireland in return for the twenty millions annual rental which landlordism extracts from its soil? Landlords’ mansions, prisons, workhouses, and constabulary barracks occupy the place where labourers’ institutes, agricultural societies, hospitals, and gymnasiums should stand, if landlordism were not robbing the Irish nation of twenty million pounds every year. These are some of the answers which apologists for that system would have received if they ventured to plead for its continued toleration. Your fight is against a system which will be held to by the landlords like grim death. Organise, unite, and sap its foundation by intelligent and persevering operation. Expose its inhuman structure to the world. In the words of the illustrious Mitchel, ‘Act as if every tillage farm in Ireland was a fortress to be held, not for the occupant and the landlord only, but for the country.’ Whether Ireland is to become a free nation or not, or her land emancipated, depends upon the way in which the garrison of farmers acquit themselves, and stand upon their right to the soil of the fatherland, and to the fruits of the labour by which they cultivated it.”

The agitation now rapidly spread through the whole south of Ireland, causing alarm to the landlords and the British Government, and people began to inquire to what the national movement would tend. At the great monster meetings held each Sunday in the various counties, the reformers demanded

the abolition of the existing land code, and the substitution in its place of such a system as would establish the cultivator of the soil as its proprietor; they demanded the total abolition of the landlord system. These demands were re-echoed and endorsed by the priests and the press. Amongst the resolutions passed at a meeting held in Balla, Mayo, on Lady-Day (August 15), was one which reads thus:—

“That as the land laws of this country were conceived in a spirit of hostility to the well-being of its people, and are enforced with a total disregard to the social right and necessities of the tiller of the soil, we demand their abolition as an act of justice, as well as an indispensable requisite to the contentment and prosperity of Ireland, and the substitution of a small proprietary system, which will protect the fruits of the farmer’s industry by placing him in the undisputed possession of the land he cultivates.”

This is a sample of those adopted at the other meetings.

A most important event occurred in the session of Parliament just closed; namely, the repeal of the Convention Act. It was eighty-six years since the people of Ireland held a convention for the discussion of their national affairs; in 1793 the Irish Convention Act was passed for the purpose of preventing them from deliberating upon their political affairs. This incident was speedily taken advantage of by Michael Davitt to start the National Land League in Mayo; and also at a meeting of the Home Rule League in Dublin, September 11, it was decided to hold a National Convention the following February, before the meeting of Parliament. Mr Parnell, in his speech at the meeting, said—

“Unless we unite to a great extent all shades of political opinion in the country, I fail to see how we can expect ever to attain to national independence; and I think now, when we are considering what we are to do for the future, when we are taking this very important step, we should endeavour to bring along with us as many men as possible of all shades of opinion,—we should endeavour to close up our ranks, and not create unnecessary stumbling-blocks in the way of men joining the national movement, who otherwise might be disposed to join it, but who are prevented by one cause or another from taking part in the work.”

The first Irish Convention since the repeal of the Act was held



on August 16 by the farmers of Mayo. Over fifty delegates attended, representing twenty-four districts in the county, the object being to establish a *National Land League*. Mr Louden, barrister, of Westport, who presided, said the object of their present movement was the abolition of landlordism and the substitution for it of a peasant proprietary. At the approaching election they would vote for no candidate whose cry would not be, "the land for the people." The rules for the proposed club, drawn up by Mr Michael Davitt, were adopted by the meeting. In the manifesto, also adopted, it was stated that the object of the club would be to expose landlord injustice wherever it existed, and to act as a vigilance committee on the members of Parliament, Grand Jurors, and representative bodies of the County Mayo. It was decided to print and circulate returns of the number of landlords in the county, the acreage each possessed, and how the land was acquired by them; the excess of rent paid by the tenants over the Government valuation; to publish, by placard, notices of contemplated evictions, and convene public meetings at the scene and time of these evictions; to publish full particulars of all cases of eviction and rack-rent, with the name of the landlord and agent; to publish the names of all persons who took land, or bid for land, from which the tenants had been evicted; and, finally, to publish particulars of all acts of kindness or justice on the part of landlords.

Mr Davitt said that the soil by right and justice belonged to the people of Ireland who tilled it; yet twelve Irish landlords owned between them one million three hundred acres, and five millions of Irish tillers of the soil did not own a single acre. The farmers of Ireland did not ask that the landlords' interest in the land should be confiscated, but simply asked that compensation should be given the landlords for those rights when the State, for the peace, benefit, and happiness of the people, should decree the abolition of the present landlords. The establishment of a peasant proprietary was the only thing that would satisfy the people of Ireland.

This was Davitt's first start of the Irish National Land League in Ireland, in a concrete form; and the occasion was a fitting one, being the first Convention held in Ireland for nearly ninety years! It augured well for the future success of the movement.

The agitation in September and October, 1879, became intense; it had spread through the entire South, and the North was beginning to wake up and demand low rents. The distress,

now becoming prevalent throughout the West, was attracting great attention and sympathy from other countries; and the Government, true to its routine record in such emergencies, was pouring thousands of troops into the country. The monster land meetings were attended by vast multitudes, numbering from ten to forty thousand people at each meeting. Davitt all the while was working unceasingly, attending and speaking at all the meetings he could reach, everywhere infusing vigour and determination into the people. On October 5, at a meeting in Ballinrobe, Mayo, addressing twenty thousand people, defending himself against landlord slanders, he said:—

“That magnificent gathering was the answer which the manhood of Mayo returned to the slanders heaped on that country. He had the honour of attending most of the meetings held in Mayo since the inauguration of that movement; and he hurled back with scorn and contempt the charge that he had used words which had, directly or indirectly, encouraged the commission of acts of violence. He had always insisted that the man who would commit offence in connection with that movement would injure the cause he thought of advocating. He deliberately charged the landlord system with the murder of two millions of Irish people, with the forced exile of two millions more, and with the impoverishment and misery of two-thirds of the people whom it had left alive; and he declared that such a system stood convicted before high heaven as infamous and inhuman, and that it was a duty incumbent on every one of its living victims to work and labour unceasingly until that system was abolished in Ireland.”

The following manifesto, which was written by Mr Davitt, was next issued, being signed by Mr Parnell and some fifty other prominent Irishmen:—

“The land and rent agitation which has originated in the West of Ireland, and is rapidly spreading throughout the country, has now assumed such national proportions that it becomes a question of first importance, to all who sympathise with its legitimate objects, how best to guide the popular movement to the attainment of those ends. Temporary abatements of excessive rents are being, and may continue to be, obtained through the various agencies of a sympathetic but unorganised advocacy, which the existing widespread and alarming distress elicits from the press and bodies of the community; but, without the creation

of some constituted guide or directing influence, the primary, if not the sole, cause of the existing poverty of the agricultural classes will not be removed. Independent of the effect which the products of the vast free lands of America and other favoured countries must have in competition with the produce created under rent-tied and paralysing conditions in Ireland, almost all the evils under which her people suffer are referable to a land system glaringly antagonistic to the first principles of justice and fair government, which place the good of the greatest number above the privileged gratification of the few. Landlordism, founded as an institution of systematic partiality, has proved itself but too true to the spirit of its origin, by reducing all who are dependent on, but unprotected by ownership of, the soil to a degraded, semi-mendicant existence, and, in addition, induces the loss of that independent character which arises from an independence of position. The duties which feudal laws and customs exacted in return from those in whom they recognised certain arbitrary rights, have been ignored by Irish landlordism in its relations to the soil and those dependent upon the fruits of its cultivation, thus adding to the other indictments against the system a non-fulfilment of essential obligations. Any land system which does not tend to improve the value of land, and enable cultivation to meet the exigencies of those dependent upon its produce, stands self-condemned as barbarous, unjust, and reprehensible.

“The diminished population of our country, the millions of our race who perished in, or fled from, a land in which God intended they should not die by hunger; the continued struggle with poverty which those have to maintain who yet cling to their native soil; and the periodic climaxation of the impoverishing influences which landlordism exercises upon the social life of Ireland, demand at last, in face of yet another impending national calamity, the application of a remedy which can no longer be denied the salvation of a people. In contrast to the social wretchedness to which a barbarous land system has reduced our country is the rapidly progressing prosperity of those people at whose demand, or for whose benefit, such a system has been swept away, and the cultivator of the soil has replaced the landlord as its proprietor. The surplus produce of lands thus freed, with agricultural industry thus relieved from its rent taxation, is now placed, by easy transit over sea and land, in competition with what is produced under conditions of land tenure the most unfavourable, and incentives to toil the

least encouraging, that ever regulated the chief industry of any civilised country. When to this is added the adverse influences of successive bad seasons, on the point of culminating in what threatens to be the worst yet experienced since famine years, the position of the Irish farmer, and those depending upon the fruits of his enterprise and labour, assumes an aspect of menacing ruin, which, to consider as transient or accidental, would be a criminal disregard of the vital existence of a people. Impelled by the desperate circumstances of their situation, the farming and other classes concerned have proclaimed their grievances in public meetings and by the press, demanding the remedies which alone can redress them. A *consensus* of opinion, apart from immediate interestedness, has declared that the remedy put forward by the present agitation is founded on justice, reason, and expediency, and that its application is absolutely essential to meet the evils complained of, and insure the prosperity and contentment of Ireland. In formulating a demand for ownership of the soil by the occupiers in substitution for that of the landlords, the people of Ireland neither contemplate nor ask for the confiscation of those proprietary rights which existing laws must necessarily recognise and protect, but that, for the transfer of those rights to an industrial ownership, a fair compensation may be given to those who shall be called upon to agree to such transfer for the settlement of the agrarian strife of the country and the supreme good of its people. To carry out a project as vast as that which we contemplate, must require means in proportion to the difficulties that must be encountered in the undertaking. Tenants' defence associations must be organised in every county, and assistance be rendered to farmers who may be called upon to defend themselves against an unjust or capricious exercise of landlord power. The wealth of Ireland is almost entirely in the hands of that class which we propose, for the good of the country, to deprive of the absolute possession of the soil; and it is but natural to expect that strong and influential opposition will be offered by those who will be called upon to surrender the privileges they have so long enjoyed—even in virtue of compensation and expediency. To meet this opposition, and guide the national movement for freeing the land of Ireland, assistance of two kinds must be forthcoming; the one, and most essential kind, is an organised development of earnestness, and a resolute attitude on the part of the 600,000 landless farmers of Ireland, as well as those whose daily bread depends upon the prosperity of their fatherland, in demanding their just rights as

guaranteed in the settlement we propose. The second aid required is money. Neither has ever been wanting when the national spirit of our country and the patriotism of her exiled sons have been appealed to in a patriotic cause; and we are confident they will not be withheld now when the very soil of Ireland is the object we desire to free, and the land slavery of our people the thing we are resolved shall be abolished for ever. None of our race have had such bitter experience of the wrongs of landlordism as those who have been compelled to seek abroad the food denied at home, and none should more readily and generously sympathise with those who are resolved to retain a firm grip of their Irish homesteads, than the exiled who were forced by iniquitous laws to leave them.

"In the great Shelter Land of Peoples, 10,000,000 of the Irish race have found a home. The system we aspire to abolish has banished them from Ireland. Benefiting by laws which afford equal protection and encouragement to all citizens of the great Republic of America, they can appreciate the efforts which aim at affording equal incentives to progress to their crushed and persecuted kindred here. Not alone to our fellow-countrymen in America, but to all whom evil laws have scattered the world over, as well as to all other nationalities who sympathise with a wronged and impoverished people who at last are resolved upon a remedy for the evils afflicting them, do we call for an advocacy of our cause, and support in our efforts to achieve success. In constituting ourselves a committee for the purpose of carrying out this work, we are animated with but one desire—to aid the tenant-farmers, and those depending upon the soil of Ireland, to lift themselves from the misery and social degradation in which they are plunged, into a position where the notice to quit and the rack-rent will not operate against their industry, security, and contentment. We are influenced by no party-spirit in making this appeal, nor do we in any way purpose to place this committee in antagonism with existing bodies or organisations employed in other departments of national labour. To free the land of Ireland from the unwise and unjust restrictions which militate against its proper cultivation and prevent the development of its full resources should be a labour above the customary influences of party or sectional strife, and be guided alone by motives of disinterested effort for the benefit of our common country, and the improvement, contentment, and prosperity of the greatest number of our fellow-countrymen. The grounds upon which we feel authorised to issue this appeal

are the fact of our being either directly or indirectly connected with the agitation which has sprung from the distress that has evoked a national condemnation of the present land system. As this land movement has won an endorsement from public opinion of an occupier proprietary settlement of the land question, those who have advocated such a remedy prior to, and in conjunction with, the national demand now made for it, feel themselves justified in taking such steps as may be best calculated to ensure its application to the existing land evils of our country. In pursuance of this intention, we issue this appeal to Irishmen the world over, and to those who sympathise with the object in view, to aid us in our efforts to obtain for our people the possession of an unfettered soil, and for Ireland the benefits which must result from an unrestricted development of its products and resources."

New York at once responded by guaranteeing 250,000 dols. if an Irish Member of Parliament of the advanced party would visit the United States. Two days before the appeal was issued in Ireland, a great meeting of Irish-Americans was held in Faneuil Hall, Boston, to express sympathy and tender aid to the struggling tenant-farmers in Ireland, at which the following resolution was adopted:—

"WHEREAS, News has reached us across the Atlantic that the people of Ireland are working with unexampled unanimity to obtain local self-government and the abolishment of feudal landlordism,

"Resolved, That we, the citizens of Boston, native and foreign-born, who enjoy these inestimable blessings in this land, in Faneuil Hall assembled, send back our sympathies, and pledge ourselves to a substantial support of the tenant-farmers of Ireland in their noble and patriotic efforts."

The Chairman of the meeting read a letter from Mr Davitt, which said—

"This land agitation is destined to do more for Ireland than all the movements since '98. The entire country has accepted the proposal for abolishing landlordism. All the known and active Nationalists will combine. A convention is shortly to be summoned, which will endeavour to weld the two sections of the National politicians into one."

It was decided, in October, that Mr Parnell should visit the

United States, and personally state the case of his countrymen then in the midst of a gigantic struggle for bread and freedom from landlord tyranny. The famine cloud was beginning to cast its dark shadow on the land, and there was no hope of saving the lives of thousands of the small farmers and labourers except by outside aid—nothing was expected from the British Government, and next to nothing was got.

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## CHAPTER XI.

THE IRISH NATIONAL LAND LEAGUE FORMED IN DUBLIN—THE DISTRESS INCREASING—IRISH MEMBERS INVOKE GOVERNMENT AID—DAVITT ARRESTED—LODGED IN SLIGO JAIL—"ON TO BALLA"—COMMITTED FOR TRIAL—PARNELL TO CHICAGO—DAVITT'S LECTURE IN ENGLAND.

"Pass the word that bands together,—  
Word of mystic conjuration,—  
And as fire consumes the heather,  
So the young hearts of the nation

Fierce will blaze up, quick and scathing, 'gainst the stranger and the foe."  
LADY WILDE.

THE agitation having now assumed gigantic proportions, the need of a central directing power became apparent; a thorough cohesion of the various political sections that had embraced the new platform was indispensable. While the new doctrine, so ably and unceasingly preached by Davitt and his co-workers, was received and adopted by the masses, embracing Home Rulers, Revolutionists, Repealers, and Conservatives, it was necessary to weld the entire into a concrete organisation, in order that the agitation might be properly sustained, and that its rapidly increasing power might be judiciously exercised and directed. Davitt, by his unceasing labours and logical eloquence, with the assistance of Brennan, Ferguson, Loudon, Kettle, and the others who early espoused the land programme, including the patriotic clergy of Ireland, had educated the farmers on the Land Question, and showed them where lay their remedy against landlord exactions and oppression. He had already won over to the new project Mr Parnell, who, up to this was recognised merely as the leader of the active section of the Home Rulers in Parliament. The time had arrived, therefore, for the establishment of an executive body, with its local branches to represent the country on the questions at issue. Davitt, accordingly, had a

meeting of the leading agitators convened at the Imperial Hotel, Dublin, on Tuesday, October 21, 1879, to establish the Irish National Land League. The meeting was harmonious and unanimous in its proceedings, and adopted the following set of resolutions, which created THE IRISH NATIONAL LAND LEAGUE:—

“That an association be hereby formed to be named the ‘Irish National Land League.’

“That the objects of the League are—first, to bring out a reduction of rack-rents; second, to facilitate the obtaining of the ownership of the soil by the occupiers.

“That the objects of the League can be best attained by promoting organisation among the tenant-farmers; by defending those who may be threatened with eviction for refusing to pay unjust rents; by facilitating the working of the Bright clauses of the Land Act during the winter; and by obtaining such reform in the laws relating to land as will enable every tenant to become the owner of his holding by paying a fair rent for a limited number of years.

“That Mr Charles S. Parnell, M.P., be elected president of this League.

“That Mr A. J. Kettle, Mr Michael Davitt, and Mr Thomas Brennan be appointed honorary secretaries of the League.

“That Mr J. G. Biggar, M.P., Mr W. H. O’Sullivan, M.P., and Mr Patrick Egan, be appointed treasurers.

“That the president of this League, Mr Parnell, be requested to proceed to America for the purpose of obtaining assistance from our exiled countrymen, and other sympathisers, for the objects for which this appeal is issued.

“That none of the funds of this League shall be used for the purchase of any landlord’s interest in the land, or for furthering the interests of any parliamentary candidate.”

The Land League barque, built by Michael Davitt, was now fairly launched, with Charles Stewart Parnell for captain, Tom Brennan, first officer; Pat Egan, boatswain; and Davitt as pilot, and with a loyal and experienced crew, competent to bring her safely through all the storms that John Bull and the Irish landlords might raise.

Davitt had now mustered his forces, and there was no mistaking the directness of his frequent assaults on the stronghold of landlordism. At a land meeting held at Aughmore,



County Mayo, October 26, he delivered a speech replying to a resolution in which were embodied two demands, of which he said—

“The first was an instant and adequate reduction of rents; and the second was the sweeping away, once and for ever, of the accursed system of landlordism. He did not mince matters about landlordism. He did not believe any phase of landlordism should be tolerated in Ireland. He was not there to pronounce a laudation of good landlords, who might be giving reductions now, for they were only giving back the money they had robbed the people of; at the same time, he could discriminate between a rack-renting landlord and a just one: but he was there as the uncompromising enemy of landlordism in any shape or form; and until the whole system was abolished, and the soil of Ireland given to the people, there never would be peace or contentment. They were not there to talk about fixity of tenure at fair rents, which meant fixity of landlordism; for that they were resolved never should be fixed on Irish soil. When forty or fifty meetings throughout Ireland had issued a demand for a peasant proprietary, were they there, in the barony of Costelloe, to talk about fixity of tenure? These meetings were not organised with the expectation that the English Government would concede all their demands, but with the intention of having a great truth circulated, and that was, that God intended the land to be for the people, and not for the landlords.”

And again, at a meeting in Killala, October 31, he said :—

“They were not there to confiscate, but to reform, and the reform they demanded was abolition of landlordism and the substitution in its place of such a system of laws as would secure the right of occupancy and of improvements to those who tilled the soil. If paying the hanging gale, which would be due in November, entailed hardships upon their wives or children or sisters; if it caused them to be pinched during the coming winter, and threatened their family with destitution and starvation in March—they had no right to pay that rent: not only that, they committed crime if they made their children suffer in order that the territorial avarice of the landlords should be satisfied at their expense. They must not imagine that they would be turned out by the roadside to die as in 1847. There was a spirit abroad in Ireland that would not stand that a second time in a century.”

The distress throughout the West was now making rapid strides, famine was staring tens of thousands of people in the face. The Government, though frequently appealed to, had affected to ignore the seriousness of the situation: instead of devising means of relief, it was sending spies and special reporters to the public meetings to collect evidence against the agitators; and preparing to make a swoop on the leaders, and endeavour to break up the agitation. This policy turned out a miserable failure.

On November 5, a declaration, signed by seventy Irish members of Parliament, was addressed to Lord Beaconsfield, the head of the Tory Government, then in power. It pointed out the serious necessity of taking immediate steps to avert the consequences which must result from several successive bad harvests, and the widespread distress already prevailing, and which was likely to result in famine.

The Archbishops and Bishops of Ireland, assembled in Dublin, October 24, the Primate of all Ireland in the chair, and made a similar appeal to the British Government, to prevent the people from dying of hunger. The appeals proved of little avail. Repression of the agitators, who were pleading for the lives of the people, was all that the Government thought Ireland needed; and they speedily put their project into execution, by arresting Michael Davitt, James Daly, and James Bryce Killen.

This was the first direct blow dealt by the Government at a peaceful and constitutional agitation; but it hurt the giver more than those it was intended for.

On November 19, 1879, Michael Davitt and James Bryce Killen were arrested in Dublin, and James Daly, editor of the *Connaught Telegraph*, was arrested in Castlebar, charged with having used language in public speeches calculated to incite a breach of the peace. The three prisoners were conveyed to Sligo and lodged in jail there, bail being refused. The speeches for which the arrests were alleged to have been made were delivered at a monster land meeting held at Gurteen, County Sligo, on Sunday, November 2; Rev. Roger Brennan, P.P., of Gurteen, being in the chair. The following are the portions of the speech of each on which the law officers of Dublin Castle depended for convictions. Mr Davitt, in his address, said:—

“The papers stated that the Right Hon. James Lowther (the Irish Chief Secretary) was now the guest of their highly consistent and patriotic (?) Home Rule member, Colonel King-

**Harman.** The papers also credited Mr Lowther with an original discovery, that the tenant-farmers of Ireland had £30,000,000 in the Irish banks to their credit, and that that money formed a good security to the landlords to obtain their rent during the winter. Supposing the discovery was a true one, it only represented £16 or £18 to each of the 600,000 farmers of Ireland, and were they, after their years of toil, going to hand that over to the landlords? They must first attend to the wants of their homes and families; and if after that they had a charitable disposition towards meeting the wants of the landlords, they might give what they could spare. He believed that rent for land under any circumstances, in prosperous times or in bad times, was an unjust and immoral tax upon the industry of the people. Landlordism was an open conspiracy against the well-being, prosperity, and happiness of the people, which ought to be crushed by those who suffered in consequence of it. Some ten thousand Irish landlords received twenty millions annually, or half the net earnings of the six hundred thousand tenants, without earning a penny of it by labour, investment, or risk. That was not all: they spent nearly all that money in licentious and voluptuous living in London, Paris, and elsewhere, thus draining the country of her resources.

"They were not there to listen to any schemes of fixity of tenure at fair rents, with periodical valuations. That was fixity of landlordism, of poverty, and degradation. They must have the land owned by the people. It had been hinted that the Government would endeavour to send them out to colonise Zululand. He did not believe that; because England had been taught that the Zulus could use the assegai about as well as the men of '98 used the pikes, and the amalgamation would be dangerous. He called on the people to hold by their land, to pay rent only when they had a surplus after everything else, and could afford it, and to labour on unceasingly for free land and liberty. Fixity of tenure was simply fixity of landlordism, fixity of poverty and degradation. Abolition of landlordism was the only certain remedy. The time had come when the manhood of Ireland must spring to its feet, and say it would tolerate this system no longer."

Mr James Daly, in replying to a resolution pledging the meeting not to take a farm from which a tenant had been unjustly evicted, said—

"That was the 26th meeting of the kind he had had the honour of addressing. He had been described as an agitator,

There were landlords and agents in his own county who said they would prefer to be hanged, drawn, and quartered, rather than yield to the demands made at these assemblages. But he had compiled a list of twenty such landlords in his county who, since the first meeting (held at Irishtown), had made abatements of 25 per cent. on their rents. Canon John M'Dermott, who is an enthusiastic, a good, and pious priest, had stated last Sunday, in Aughmore, that the people would not be satisfied with a peasant proprietary, and he (the speaker) was delighted to see, by his words to-day, that he had changed that opinion. He advised the farmers not to allow themselves to be evicted. If the sheriff came to any of them, it was their duty to assemble in their thousands, and reinstate the evicted person the next day. Above all, he said, let there be no coward found to take his lands."

Mr J. B. Killen said—

"Since the time when the cursed feudal laws were introduced by Norman savages, the land of Ireland had been three times confiscated, but always in favour of the aristocracy. They wanted a fourth confiscation, or rather restitution, now in favour of the people. He left it to them to say whether that was to be done by the pen, the pencil, or the sword. In the North of Ireland, where he came from, there was an old legend that there were a thousand warriors resting on their swords who would spring into existence when the spell of their enchantment was broken; and when he saw this large meeting before him, he felt that the hour had arrived when Ireland's liberty would be consummated. There were amongst them reporters from London, who were noting every single word said, for the purpose of, by a little legal frippery, putting them in dungeons. As in other countries, they should obtain their rights by using the voice, the pen—he was going to say the sword—but swords were not used in this country."

Very Rev. Canon M'Dermott here said Mr Killen should not be advocating the use of physical force.

Mr Killen denied that he did so; but he "would like to see every one there armed with a rifle, and knowing how to use it. The days of namby-pamby speaking were over."

A further incentive for Davitt's arrest was his baffling of the Government spies and reporters by making a speech in Irish, which they were unable to report, at a meeting held at Corofin,

County Galway, on Sunday, November 9, at which thirteen thousand people were present. In his Irish speech Mr Davitt alluded to the presence of Government reporters, and urged the people not to be intimidated, but to organise their strength for the overthrow of landlord power. Davitt's example was followed by other speakers. Father "Tom" M'Donough, the patriotic parish priest of Corofin, also addressed the people in the mother tongue, and said that every one of his auditors understood him. One of the tenant-farmer speakers, who failed in the English, then delivered in Irish a most impassioned speech on the wrongs of his class, and a fierce invective against persons who encouraged the landlords in rack-renting by coveting their neighbours' land. Indignation meetings, denouncing the arrests, were held all over Ireland and in England.

The day after the arrests, the following placard was extensively posted throughout Mayo :—

**"TO THE PEOPLE OF MAYO: FELLOW-COUNTRYMEN—**  
 The hour of trial has come. Your leaders are arrested. You know your duty. Will you do it? Yes, you will. Balla is the place of meeting, and Saturday is the day. Come in your thousands, and show the Government and the world that your rights you will maintain. To the rescue, in the mightiness of your numbers, of the land and liberty. God save the people. Balla, Balla, Saturday next."

On the day announced, November 22, a most remarkable and critical scene in the land movement in Mayo was enacted close to Balla. A small farmer, named Anthony Dempsey, holding under Sir Robert Lynch Blosse, was under sentence of eviction for non-payment of a year's rent. The land was taken possession of a week previously. The man's father was lying on a bed of fever, and his children were stricken with measles. The sheriff did not, under the circumstances, insist on completing the eviction at that time, and Saturday, November 22, was fixed for the final expulsion of the family from their home. It was the first eviction in Mayo since the beginning of the land movement, and the placards summoned the people to assemble at the scene of the eviction. The summons had hardly been issued when the arrests were made, and the men lodged in prison. Thereupon the proclamation, printed above, urged the people to make a double protest against the eviction and the arrests. It was felt to be a crisis. All sorts of rumours began to circulate: that the meeting had been abandoned—that it would be sup-

pressed by force—that the eviction would take place—that the eviction would not take place—that anything or everything might happen. The leading London newspapers and news agencies despatched special correspondents to the spot as to a seat of war. A military officer boasted in Castlebar that the military would disperse any assemblage with bullets, and that the leaders would be specially picked off. On the other hand, it began to leak out, towards the end of the week, that certain communications to the Castle had ended by the determination to defer or abandon the eviction; but to the last all remained in a state of painful uncertainty. On the morning of the day of meeting, the following placard was extensively circulated:—

“PARNELL AND DAVITT TO THE PEOPLE OF MAYO.—  
*Men of Mayo*: We earnestly counsel such of you as intend to be witnesses of the eviction scene, to be dignified, orderly, and peaceful in your conduct. The future of our movement depends upon your attitude this day. Give no excuse for violence on the part of the Government, and our great cause is won.”

Thousands assembled to take part in the meeting, which passed off quietly, as the sheriff agreed to give Dempsey more time, so that the eviction did not take place. An eye-witness gave the following description of a remarkable scene observed from the place of meeting:—“A ‘Rath,’ within fifty yards of Dempsey’s house, on the brow of the hill, was fixed as the place of meeting. The whole road below, for more than a mile, was covered by this huge peasant procession. As the head of the column reached the foot of the hill it parted, two to either side, and climbed the hill in an immense semicircle extending over the whole face of the hill. The two horns of this vast crescent advanced quickly and simultaneously, as if with the intention of surrounding the house, and with it a large body of the police. The police immediately prepared to retire; but Mr Parnell exerted himself to stop the movement, and both sides of the advancing procession having halted, came quietly together around the speakers. There must have been quite eight thousand men in that extraordinary array, and their self-possession, orderliness, and enthusiasm were even more remarkable than their numbers.”

Messrs Parnell, Loudon, Dillon, Brennan, and others delivered speeches. Mr Brennan made an ardent appeal to the patriotism of the policemen, who were within hearing, not to join in the

inhuman work of the destroyers of their own race against the people. For this he was subsequently arrested.

On November 25, Davitt and Killen were brought up in the police court for examination. The court was crowded with spectators. Messrs Killen and Davitt appeared perfectly cheerful and fearless. Mr Monroe, Queen's counsel, said if he could prove the utterance of Mr Davitt's alleged words, that the manhood of Ireland should spring to its feet and say it would tolerate landlords and landlordism no longer, the magistrates would be bound to commit him. Police evidence was called to prove their utterance. Davitt, who had been occupied all the morning preparing a written defence, before commencing to deliver it protested against Mr Monroe's remark that he had already experienced the clemency of the Crown, and declared that he was innocent of the charges on which he was convicted in 1870. Mr Monroe, in his remarks, said that Davitt was probably the most dangerous of the Irish agitators, and specially pointed to his language comparing the Zulu assegai to the Irish pike. Davitt was committed for trial; but, bail being accepted, he was discharged from custody. The town of Sligo was on the verge of a riot that night; the police were stoned, and had to charge the people and clear the streets. Mr Davitt was serenaded by two bands.

The attempt of the Government to intimidate and put down the agitation by making the arrests proved a signal failure. It was condemned by the press and the people everywhere, and gave renewed energy and strength to the agitation.

The agitation continued to gain strength under the management of the Land League. The tenants in several districts had now taken a positive stand, and refused to pay any more rent, unless suitable reductions were made. The Government had refused to take any adequate measures for the relief of the distress, so that the people were compelled to look to outside quarters for aid. Parnell sent the following message to Chicago, December 12:—

“DUBLIN, December 12, 1879.

“*To the Editor of the Chicago Daily News.*—The arrest of Davitt was prompted by the desire of the Government to get rid of him as the chief organiser of the land agitation, and also in hopes that the people would be intimidated by this step of prosecution, or driven to illegal and violent action. The result, instead of arresting the movement, has powerfully assisted it. Land clubs are being organised in every part of the kingdom,

and subscriptions pour in. The Nationalists, Repealers, and Home Rulers are united, and have found a common platform and watchword, 'The Land for the People.' In its attempt to crush the movement, it may resolve upon future illegal and unconstitutional action, and the arrest of other leaders; but the landlords are cowed, and the Castle is intimidated by the determined action of the people. The threatened evictions are abandoned, as the result of the success of Balla's anti-eviction; there is no bidding for estates at the sales; in landed estates, the *courant* tenants are allowed to become owners on easy terms; the leading English reformers are in strong sympathy with our movement. The French press at last is showing its appreciation of the true position of affairs, and send special correspondents to watch the progress of the campaign. The cause of the people is maintained with redoubled vigour, notwithstanding the snow on the ground, and that famine and cold already pinch many. Great suffering is anticipated after Christmas, and the Government trusts that in this way the courage of the masses may be broken. Swarms of paid spies are infesting the country; additional troops are despatched to stations in the South and West, and large levies of constabulary recruits are just ordered; all indicating the determination of the Government to take advantage of the sufferings of the people, and drive them to deeds of violence. No relief works have yet been undertaken, nor is there any prospect of State assistance; but orders have been issued to prepare additional workhouse accommodations. The attitude of our people up to the present time is magnificent: they are self-restrained and reliant, and resolved not to be betrayed into any precipitate or illegal action.

"An important meeting of the executive committee of the National Land League was held to-day, when, among other important business, it was decided that I should leave for New York with John Dillon, son of the late John B. Dillon, as soon as possible.

(Signed) "CHARLES STEWART PARNELL."

Great meetings were now organised throughout England to protest against the arbitrary action of the Government, and aid the Irish Land League movement. On November 30, one hundred thousand people assembled in Hyde Park, London, to sympathise with the agitation in Ireland. Messrs Parnell, Davitt, and Finigan delivered addresses at meetings in various English towns.



On Sunday, November 30, Mr Davitt addressed a crowded meeting of the Irishmen of the Tyneside, in the Music Hall, Gateshead. A tremendous crowd assembled in front of the Central Station, Newcastle, and, preceded by a banner and band, accompanied Mr Davitt in procession across the Tyne to the meeting-place in Gateshead. The streets of the latter place were lined with spectators, and the large Music Hall was crowded to the doors. Mr Councillor M'Anulty occupied the chair.

In his address, Mr Davitt said—

“The definition of rent given by John Stuart Mill was the surplus profit left to the tenant-farmer after he had paid the wages of his labourers and provided for his own and his children's wants. Now, in Ireland this year there was not only no surplus profit, but there was not a sufficiency to keep the people alive. Therefore, according to John Stuart Mill's definition of rent, there was no rent in the country, and therefore there was no rent to pay. But, although he had adduced that argument on many platforms, he had not told the people to act up to its logical conclusion, and to pay no rent. He had told them to see to their own and their children's wants, and then to go to the landlord and offer him what they had left; and surely, under the circumstances, no people could be asked to do more. Regarding this solemn contract that they heard so much about between the tenant-farmer and his landlord, he held that a compulsory contract was not as binding as if it was a voluntary one; and he said that the contract between landlords and tenants in Ireland was compulsory—and why? Ireland was essentially an agricultural country. They had no factories; they had no industries, such as were in England; they had no Manchesters, Liverpools, Tynesides, or Gatesheads. If the tenant-farmer in England found he had to pay what he considered was a rack-rent, he could throw up his farm and go into the next manufacturing town, and get employment for himself and his children. But in Ireland he could not do that: if he gave up his farm, he had only one of two courses to take—either to walk into the workhouse, or to leave Ireland for ever, and seek his bread in exile. Hence when a landlord went to a tenant and said he would raise his rent from £10 to £12, or from £12 to £15 a year, what alternative had he? Would they ask him to go to the workhouse, would they ask him to take his family to England or to America, while he had that love for his

fatherland which characterised all the Irish people, and which, he hoped, would always characterise them? Certainly not. And that was the compulsion, and a contract entered into under those circumstances was not a fair contract, was not a just contract; and was not as binding as a contract would be here in England, where the tenant had the alternative either of paying his rent, or throwing up his farm and seeking employment in his own country, which employment the Irishman could not find in Ireland.

“Having said so much upon this question of rent, he came to another demand that they had made in Ireland, and that demand was that the four or five millions of acres of waste land to be found in Ireland should be reclaimed. Now, surely if there was anything wicked in his having asked for assistance to prevent the people from starvation, there was nothing malicious (to quote the words of the warrant for his arrest) in asking that the waste land of Ireland should be reclaimed, in order to find employment for the people, and in order to benefit the country. Surely there was nothing revolutionary in that. There was nothing to alarm even the Government of England, or to frighten the landlords with the ghost of Communism or Socialism. Travelling throughout Ireland, they would see in all parts, in every county, splendid land running to waste; and the explanation they would get from the car-driver, or from those with whom they came in contact, was that those lands had been quitted in the famine years. The people were driven from them, and sent to the workhouse to die, and some across to England. Since then this land had lain fallow. Well, when that land was created by Almighty God, it was not intended to lie fallow, it was not intended to run waste: it was intended to produce food to support the people whom God intended to be the inhabitants of Ireland; and if they now asked that that land should be put to the use for which it was created—namely, that it should be reclaimed, in order to give employment to willing people, to keep capital in the country, and to increase the value of cereal produce—surely there was nothing wicked or revolutionary in that. That was one of the demands that they had made from those ‘violent and inflammatory’ platforms in Ireland during the last twelve months.

“They had asked that some of the church surplus should be employed in reclaiming this waste land.

“Landlordism was a system which was responsible for the deaths, he might almost say to the number of two millions of

their people, during the famine years of 1847-48; and when he saw the hovels their people were compelled to live in now on account of that system—when he saw the poverty and degradation which prevailed on a land made fruitful by the bounty of God—it was impossible for him to restrain his indignation. This system was responsible for the misery of the Irish people; and when he saw their forced exile to England, often to spend a life of toil and misery, and yet was asked to speak of it in buttered phrases, he answered ‘No.’ He held that he had a double duty to perform in denouncing it; and so long as he had brain to plan, hand to dare, or heart to feel for Ireland, so long would he stand an uncompromising enemy to landlordism.

“He had taken part in this agitation from a sense of duty. He had felt that a crisis was coming to his country, and that it was necessary to rouse the people of Ireland in order that they should not be guilty of the suicidal act, the guilty act, of lying down to die as their kindred did in ’48. That was a blot upon their country. Although he could lay the blame on alien misgovernment, still it did not redound to the credit of the people of 1847-48 that they lay down on the roadside and died. Mr Parnell and others were determined that such a state of things would not be allowed to come without the Government being forewarned of it. In conclusion, he asked the support of the Irishmen of Tyneside in behalf of the Irish National Land League, of which Mr Parnell was the head. This league made war against no political party in Ireland; it was a neutral platform, upon which the Nationalist, Home Ruler, Repealer, and Non-participant could stand together—upon which every Irishman, worthy of the name, could join without compromising his particular principles on these heads; and its object was to root the people on the soil, and make them prosperous, contented, and happy. Surely there was no man who would stand on a quibble of principle, and refuse to co-operate in this great labour. He was a Nationalist, and not a Home Ruler; but still on this platform he recognised no difference, for he believed that Home Ruler and Repealer were anxious to have their people comfortable and happy. In this league they sunk political differences, and grasped hands, in order to rescue a starving people, and to raise Ireland from that social degradation in which landlordism had sunk it.”

After speaking at some of the great English meetings, Mr Parnell, accompanied by Mr Dillon, sailed for America, where

they arrived by the steamer *Scythia*, on Friday, January 2. Receptions for the Land League delegates had meanwhile been arranged in many of the American cities.

## CHAPTER XII.

PARNELL AND DILLON IN NEW YORK—GREAT MEETING IN MADISON SQUARE GARDEN—PARNELL ADDRESSES CONGRESS—THE FAMINE IN IRELAND—HOW THE LANDLORDS ACTED—THE RELIEF BILL—LAND MEETING ON THE SPOT WHERE DAVITT WAS BORN.

“A million a decade! What does it mean?  
 A nation dying of inner decay;  
 A churchyard's silence where life has been;  
 The base of the pyramid crumbling away;  
 A drift of men gone over the sea,  
 A drift of the dead where men should be.”—SPERANZA.

THE critical condition of affairs in Ireland, coupled with the recent appeals for aid made to the Irish race in America, produced great sympathy in favour of the agitation, and a desire, on the part of Irish-Americans, to render all the aid possible, both for the people who were on the verge of starvation, and for the prosecution of the agitation. Meetings were held in various cities throughout the States to devise the best means of meeting the emergency. From many of those meetings delegates were sent to New York with offers of aid, and invitations to Messrs Parnell and Dillon, who had just arrived, to visit the several towns represented, and address the people.

The first great meeting at which the Land League delegates—Messrs Parnell and Dillon—spoke, was held in Madison Square Garden, New York, on Sunday evening, January 4, 1880, nine thousand persons being present. The reception given the delegates by the vast multitude was intensely enthusiastic. Mrs Parnell and her three daughters were present. Judge Alker, Chairman of the Reception Committee, introduced the Hon. Henry E. Gildersleeve—the rifleman—as chairman of the meeting, who introduced Mr Parnell. After Messrs Parnell and Dillon had delivered speeches, the following resolutions were adopted:—

“Resolved,—1. That Mr Charles Stewart Parnell and Mr John Dillon are deserving of our earnest gratitude and most unquali-

fied confidence; that the sacrifices they have made and the perils they have encountered in coming to this prosperous land to plead the cause of a suffering nation are entitled to a generous and practical recognition and response; and that the promises made by us in our welcoming address it should be our pride as well as our duty to redeem.

"2. That we give our suffering brothers in Ireland our heart-whole sympathies in these the days of their deep distress; and, while giving sympathy, we would counsel hope for the better day which, in God's good time, will assuredly come.

"3. That while the relief of the immediate suffering has a claim upon our immediate action, we cannot overlook the fact that the system which produces this suffering needs change; that money for the purchase of food, fuel, and raiment for the afflicted poor is needed at once, and that, beyond and besides this primary call, funds are needed to strengthen the hands of the Irish Land League in their struggle against landlord monopoly; and that, therefore, we suggest to the generous public that, while remembering the pressing claims now presented for relief, there is an obligation to aid in the prevention of the recurrence of such claims; and this latter can only be effected by that readjustment of the land tenure of Ireland contemplated by the Irish Land League.

"4. That subscription lists be at once opened, a finance committee, secretaries, and treasurers appointed, and that a formal and earnest appeal be made to aid in the grand achievement of giving an ancient people a living in their own land; realising the idea given utterance to by Mr Parnell, on arrival, of giving Ireland a place among the nations of the earth—in other words, 'Ireland for the Irish and the Irish for Ireland.'"

The visiting delegates were now fairly before the American people. They travelled continuously, and spoke at meetings all over the United States during January, February, and March. Mr Parnell said, before his departure, they had travelled 10,000 miles and spoken in 62 cities. They were everywhere accorded enthusiastic receptions by the American people, as well as by the Irish-Americans. The object of their visit proved eminently successful, both as regards sympathy and material aid, 200,000 dols. having been subscribed, according to Mr Parnell's own words. J

On Monday, the 2nd of February, by vote of Congress, Mr Parnell addressed the House on the state of Ireland. The

action of Congress on the matter was as follows :—On the 29th January, Mr Young, of Ohio, submitted the following resolution, which was read, considered, and agreed to :—

*“Resolved by the House of Representatives, That the invitation extended to this body to hear the address of Hon. Mr Parnell, a member of Parliament, to be delivered in this city on the evening of February 2, on the distressed condition of Ireland, be accepted.”*

Mr Cox, of New York, proposed the following resolution, to follow that of Mr Young :—

“In response to the invitation just presented and accepted, requesting the House to agree to take part in the ceremonies to be observed in the reception of Mr Charles Stewart Parnell, a representative of the Irish people, for the delivery of an address on Irish affairs, and because of the great interest which the people of the United States take in the condition of Ireland, with which this country is so closely allied by many historic and kindred ties : Therefore—

*“Be it resolved, That the hall of this House be granted for the above purpose, on the 2nd day of February next, and that the House meet on that day and time to take part in the ceremonies.”*

On the evening of the day named, the House was packed with Congressmen, Senators, ladies, and visitors. At 7.30 o'clock, Speaker Randall entered the hall, accompanied by Mr Parnell. The Speaker read the resolution under which the session of the evening was held. He then said, that, in conformity with that resolution, he had the honour and pleasure to introduce Charles Stewart Parnell, M.P., who had come among them to speak of the distress of his country.

Mr Parnell was received with applause from the floor and galleries. He commenced his speech by thanking the House for the honour conferred upon him, and entered at once upon an explanation of the wrongs of the Irish people and the causes of it, which he ascribed to the system of land tenure. Every allusion that was made to the help that America was giving to Ireland was received with demonstrations of approval. In the course of his speech, Mr Parnell said it would be a proud boast for America if it should aid in reforming the land tenure of Ireland and solving the question without the shedding of one drop of blood, as it could do. He alluded to the fact that he had

American blood in his veins, and this elicited a perfect storm of applause. He thanked Americans for the generosity of their contributions, and hoped this would be the last Irish famine they would have to aid. He concluded his speech at 8.22 o'clock, and the House immediately adjourned. At the close of the meeting Mr Parnell held a levee in the hall, and was introduced to members and others by Speaker Randall.

Parnell's speech was cabled to London by the British minister at Washington, as soon as it was delivered: it was a bitter pill for John Bull to swallow; but he had to swallow it all the same.

While Messrs Parnell and Dillon were pursuing their patriotic mission in the United States, most appalling accounts of the dreadful suffering caused by the famine in Ireland were being published daily in the press. In the beginning of January, 1880, Mr Davitt visited Connemara to see for himself the state of affairs in that wild region. On his return to Dublin he reported at a meeting of the Irish National Land League, January 13, that both priests and people with whom he had conversed expressed the belief that private charity would be insufficient to cope with the distress between March and June, and that Government aid would alone prevent starvation. The people along the sea-coast from Spiddal to Clifden were, he said, eating the potatoes that should be kept for seed. He suggested that relief committees should not overlook the necessity of providing seed for districts where people had been compelled to use as food what should be observed for the coming seed-time, and that a new seed, "the Champion," should be brought into the country. No out-door relief was given by unions along the Connemara sea-coast.

A few of the particular cases of distress reported in January and February will give a fair idea of what the general suffering must have been in those months. On January 14, sixty able-bodied men, with their families, were admitted to the Killarney workhouse. On the same day, a woman with three children, one of whom was dead in her arms from hunger and exposure, applied for admission; she had walked from Cahirciveen, forty miles, seeking food for her children.

On January 23, a letter from Clifden, County Galway, was published in Dublin, which said—

"Last evening Clifden presented an appalling picture. Crowds of ragged, famished men and women, thronged around the doors of the meal-shops, clamouring for food. Many had

waited up all through the night in the bitter frost, besieging the houses of the relief committee. Several thousands flocked into town during the day, demanding relief. Several men seized members of the committee, crying, 'We are starving; we must have food!' The police had to be called in to clear the meal-shops of the mob. They gathered threateningly around the house where the relief committee were sitting. Knots of men and women, who could not be reached that day by the relief committee remained, in the street until midnight, although the air was intensely cold. Fever has broken out at Carna; four families are stricken down in one village."

On February 13, a poor woman, named Mary Hurley, whose sense of shame put begging and the workhouse out of the question, died of absolute want in Fermoy, County Cork. Many others in the same town were reported to be approaching the last stage of misery. On February 21, a case of insanity, resulting from destitution, was reported from Straloffath, near Letterkenny, County Donegal. A man named Denis Martin lived with his sister and a brother's child on a high mountain farm of twenty-six acres, the rent of which was £4 3s 8d—an increase, it was stated, of 50 per cent. over the rent paid some years ago. Three months previously his cows were seized for arrears of rent, and his horse, by which he was able to eke out a living by carting turf to Letterkenny, died. Their extreme poverty was concealed until the day named, when Martin's sister made an attempt on the life of the child, whose screams attracted the neighbours, and it was discovered that they had had no food for four days. The sister was put into an asylum, and Martin, who had likewise exhibited symptoms of lunacy, was taken care of by his brother, who was also in distress.

At a meeting of the Mansion House Committee on January 31, Lord Mayor Gray referred to the reports that three inquests had been held in the neighbourhood of Parsonstown, wherein verdicts were rendered of death from destitution.

The Registrar-General for Ireland stated, at a meeting of the Marlborough Relief Committee, that, according to the best information in his possession, two-thirds of the potato crop, representing five and three-quarter million of pounds sterling, failed in 1879. This, coupled with the bad harvests the two previous years, brought the people to the verge of the famine-graves, from which they were rescued by the Land League; for, had it not been for the timely and energetic action of that



body, thousands of trenches would have been filled with famine-corpses, as in 1846-47.

The landlords were by no means idle spectators of what was transpiring around them. They thought it high time to go for their "pound of flesh," while a little yet remained on the bones of their gaunt victims. Ejectments and processes were being showered in on the famine districts, so that the price of the last loaf, which was to save the life of a hungry child, might be captured before it was devoured. The people resisted the writs which would deprive them of their last hope, and police bayonets were frequently reddened in the blood of the starving peasants. Here are a few instances worthy of being remembered and placed to the debit side of the landlord account:—

In the beginning of January a process-server, named Langley, surrounded with police, went to serve ejectments at Knockrickard, six miles from Claremorris, County Mayo; their way was barred by about five hundred women and girls, who precipitated themselves on the constabulary to get at Langley and take the writs from him. The report of the affair says: "A scene of terrible confusion and dread ensued. The officers drew their swords and rushed among the women, most of whom were bareheaded and barefooted. One young woman had her scalp cut by a sword; another had a bayonet thrust in her arm; several were knocked down, trampled on, and had their dresses torn."

Again, in the same month, the Irish correspondent of the *New York Herald*, who at that time would not err in favour of the peasantry, writing to his paper in reference to a similar incident, said—

"The actual scene of this business was the village of Carraroe, which is on the coast, about twenty miles from the town of Galway. The local police, anticipating a popular movement, occupied the house before the arrival of the crowd, and thus frustrated their intentions. Messengers were dispatched to the station at Spiddal, five miles distant, asking for reinforcements. These arrived during the evening, and the police remained on the premises all night. Meanwhile the telegraph wires had been in operation, and the next morning an additional detachment of fifty constables arrived on the scene. In the midst of this little army, Fenton, the process-server, issued from the house to execute his legal mission. The first house visited was that of William Faherty. Women surrounded the door, and, as

Fenton advanced to effect service, they clutched the process and tore it to shreds. The police then charged all round with their sword bayonets, wounding several severely. The women were bayoneted right and left; and one of them, Mrs Conneally, sustained such injuries that the last rites of the Church had to be administered to her by the Rev. P. J. Newell, the Catholic priest of the place, who was an eye-witness of the scene.

"The police then proceeded to the cabin of a man named Conneally, about three hundred yards distant. They smashed open the door, which was closed, and service was effected. James Mackle's house was next visited. The women again surrounded the door, and endeavoured to wrest the process from Fenton. The police charged a second time indiscriminately, knocked some of the people down, and, it is stated, bayoneted one man while on the ground, unmercifully. Up to this the men had not interfered beyond crowding round, and no missiles were thrown at the constabulary; but now sticks and stones were freely used, and a terrible *melée* ensued. The police became much excited, and at last fired some shots over the heads of their assailants. Then the process-server attempted to deliver the document. The women, as before, snatched it out of his hand and destroyed it. Sub-Inspector Gibbons rushed into the house, and, as he advanced to the hearth, Mrs Mackle lifted a blazing turf, and smashed it on his neck. Smarting from the burning, the officer rushed back to the door, and in the struggle his sword was knocked out of his hand. The commanding officer considered that the situation was now too critical to act without the presence of a magistrate, whose orders would relieve the constables of the legal responsibility of a conflict with the peasantry. Accordingly the whole force was withdrawn, and concentrated at the police barrack in the village, where the process-server remained for protection."

On January 17, the police, escorting a party of process-servers at Kilmina, County of Mayo, were severely maltreated, and obliged to retreat, though they had their rifles loaded and bayonets fixed. Several of the police were cut about the head and face. The process-servers had their clothing torn, and the processes were captured by the mob.

Such was the state of Ireland when the Irish National Land League, through its delegates, was appealing to the American people to save the lives of the Irish peasantry.

On January 23, Messrs Davitt, Brennan, Daly, and Killen

were served with writs, calling on them, in answer to their recognisances, to appear before the Court of Queen's Bench, failing in which, they were to be again arrested. When they appeared in court, further time to plead was granted. The Government, however, saw they had bungled in making the arrests, and allowed the case to drop.

Parliament was opened on February 5, and a Relief Bill was introduced shortly afterwards, which disqualified from voting those who received aid through its provisions, and which was afterwards so tied up with red tape that it proved of little value. The whole country might have starved while the Board of Works were getting ready to administer it.

Meanwhile the agitation was continued with unabated energy. On February 1, 1880, over 15,000 people assembled on the spot where Mr Michael Davitt was born. The platform was erected over the very ruins of the old homestead from which the family had been evicted. It was at this meeting Mr Davitt delivered the speech, a portion of which we quoted in our second chapter. His vigorous denunciation of landlordism was as follows:—

“The public mind of Ireland is at present occupied with two absorbing questions, each of which has succeeded in obtaining prominence mainly through the instrumentality of this agitation. The distress is, unfortunately, the agony cry of the hour, and must, therefore, be considered by all Irishmen as constituting the one supreme object round which the sympathy and assistance of all parties must rally in vigorous efforts to raise our people from starvation, and to minimise the miseries which dog the footsteps of famine. While every nerve must be strained to stave off, if possible, the horrible fate which befell our famine-slaughtered kindred in 1847 and 1848, the attention of our people must not for a moment be withdrawn from the primary cause of these periodical calamities, nor their exertions be relaxed in this great social struggle for the overthrow of the odious system responsible for them.

“Let landlordism be removed from our country, and labour be allowed the wealth which it creates, instead of being given to legalised idlers, and no more famine will darken our land or hold Ireland up to the gaze of the civilised world as a nation of paupers. England deprives us annually of some seven millions of money for Imperial taxation, and she allows an infamous land system to rob our country of fifteen or twenty millions more, each year, to support some nine or twelve thousand lazy landlords;

and then, when famine extends its destroying wings over the land, and the dread spectre of Death stands sentinel at our thresholds, an appeal to English charity—a begging-box outside the London Mansion House—is paraded before the world, and expected to atone for every wrong inflicted upon Ireland by a heartless and hated Government, and to blot out the records of the most monstrous land code that ever cursed a country or robbed humanity of its birthright. It is humiliating to the last degree that a few thousand land-sharks should have so long and so successfully trod upon the necks of millions of Irishmen, and defrauded them of the fruits of their land, while at the same time robbing, insulting, and dragooning our country with an inhumanity unsurpassed by the titled plunderers of the Middle Ages. An average landlord may be likened to a social vulture hovering over the heads of the people, and swooping down upon the earnings and the food which that industry produces, whenever his appetite or his avarice prompts him. The tenantry in the past have stood by like a flock of frightened sheep, timid and terrified, unable to prevent this human bird of prey from devouring their own and their children's substance. While rack-rents were paid by the farmer, his family must live in semi-starvation, in wretched hovels, amid squalor and privations, barbed by the thought that the money earned by labour and sweat from day to day was being spent by his own and his children's deadly enemy, in another land, in voluptuous ease and sensual gratification. If the rack-rent was not paid, and this black mail levied upon labour in the shape of rent was not forthcoming, to be squandered by one who never earned a penny of it, out upon the roadside the earners would be cast, to take their choice of death by exposure, workhouse degradation, or banishment from home and Ireland for ever."

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## CHAPTER XIII.

THE NATIONAL LAND LEAGUE STARTED IN AMERICA—DAVITT AGAIN VISITS THE UNITED STATES—FIRST LAND LEAGUE CONVENTION IN NEW YORK—AMERICA'S AID DURING THE FAMINE—THE COMPENSATION FOR DISTURBANCE BILL REJECTED—EVICTIONS—DAVITT IN SAN FRANCISCO—THE LADIES' LAND LEAGUE BEGUN—DAVITT LEAVES FOR IRELAND—BOYCOTTING BOYCOTT—THE STATE TRIALS—THE COERCION ACT IN FORCE.

“Beautiful Ireland! who will preach to thee?

Souls are waiting for lips to vow:

And outstretched hands, that fain would reach thee,

Yearn to help, if they knew but how,

To lift the thorn-wreath off thy brow.”—SPERANZA.

BEFORE his return to Ireland, Mr Parnell announced that it was his intention to call a convention in Boston for the purpose of effecting a permanent organisation of Irish-Americans; and, in anticipation of that event, meetings were held in a number of cities, so that delegates might be chosen. This project was frustrated by the early recall to Ireland of Mr Parnell, in consequence of the dissolution of Parliament. He sailed from New York on the *Baltic*, on Thursday, March 11. New York had previous to this taken the initiative to form an organisation in connection with the Irish National Land League. On Sunday, March 7, two important meetings were held in that city—one at the Astor House, the other at Military Hall, 193 Bowery.

The Astor House meeting was composed principally of gentlemen who had taken an active part in the reception of Mr Parnell; and among them were prominent Nationalists, members of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, the St Patrick's Mutual Alliance, the 'Longshoremen's Union, the Temperance Societies, and the Catholic Young Men's Society. Mr John C. Hennessy presided, and Mr Wm. B. Clarke acted as secretary. Among those present were Walter M. O'Dwyer, J. J. W. O'Donoghue, Dr Wallace, Dr Charles S. Smith, Stephen J. Meany, T. R. Bannerman, Dennis A. Spellissy, John J. Breslin, Charles A. O'Rourke, John Henry McCarthy, James J. Treacy, John Devoy, and Roger Burke. After a very harmonious discussion, a resolution was passed forming the meeting into the "Irish National Land League and Relief Association of New York." Sixteen sub-committees, appointed at a meeting the previous Sunday, reported having succeeded in establishing a nucleus of an organisation in their respective wards, and gave encouraging

assurances of the good-will manifested towards the movement. A committee, consisting of John Devoy, Thomas R. Bannerman, Dr C. J. Smith, John J. Breslin, Walter M. O'Dwyer, Wm. Connolly, and John C. Hennessy, was appointed to draw up a constitution and bye-laws, and report at the next meeting, and these, with Mr O'Dwyer, as chairman, Drs Donlin, Wallace, and M'Guire, and Colonel Michael Kirwin added, were appointed as a temporary Executive Committee.

At the Military Hall meeting, five delegates each from twenty Irish National organisations were present. Mr Cornelius Roche was elected chairman. After some discussion, it was unanimously resolved to organise an association to aid the Irish National Land League, to be called the Irish National Land League of New York. A committee to draw up an address to the Irish people of New York, and a constitution and bye-laws, was appointed.

In the evening an informal conference took place between some of the officers elected at each of those meetings, and arrangements were made for a formal conference at the Astor House, with a view to having a joint meeting on the following Sunday, merging the two bodies, and uniting their efforts to thoroughly organise New York city.

On the day of Mr Parnell's departure for Ireland, in response to an invitation issued by him to the representatives of various Irish societies and prominent Irishmen, a conference was held in the New York Hotel. There were twenty-eight Irish organisations represented; after some discussion, it was decided to form a National Irish Land League in the United States, to be auxiliary to the Irish National Land League in Dublin. Mr Parnell, in addressing the conference, said that in his absence Mr Dillon would fill his place. He asked that the conference sustain him, and spread the Land League organisation all over the continent. The meeting adopted the following resolutions:—

“1. That in the opinion of this meeting it is expedient that an auxiliary organisation of the Irish Land League be formed in America, in harmony with the organisation in Ireland, and to assist its objects.

“2. That the Irish Land League in America be organised by States, Territories (and District of Columbia), with an Executive Council for each, the members of which are to be elected by the several local branches in the State; each being entitled to a

representation in the council in proportion to membership. The president, secretary, and treasurer shall reside in the same city.

"3. That there shall be a Central Council in the Union, consisting of representatives from the several State Councils, through whom official communications and funds may be forwarded to the Dublin Executive of the Irish National Land League. The secretary, treasurer, and president to reside in the same city.

"4. That a Convention of local associations to elect their State Council for the transaction of business meet within their State at least once a year.

"5. That a Convention of representatives of State Councils be held yearly to elect the Central Council in the same way.

"6. That a Committee on Rules be hereby appointed to draw up suggestions for the guidance of the councils and the local associations, such rules being held to be the rules of the councils and associations, unless objected to by a majority of the branches and councils after the lapse of one month after the notification thereof.

"7. That an Executive Committee of this meeting, consisting of one from each organisation represented, be appointed to select said committee."

Mr Parnell deputed to the committee itself the work of appointing the Committee on Rules; and he suggested the adoption of the following resolution as defining said duty:—

"*Resolved*—That a committee be appointed, with power to add to its number gentlemen from all parts of the Union, to carry out the resolution adopted at the full meeting; this committee to have power to consult with leading gentlemen in various parts of the country, and to extend and promote the organisation."

In accordance with the last resolution, the committee appointed issued the following circular, on March 30, to one hundred and eight gentlemen in all parts of the United States, whose names had been approved of for a Provisional Central Council. Mr Parnell had himself selected many of the names before his departure:—

"DEAR SIR—A Conference of representatives of Irish societies, and gentlemen friendly to the Irish Land movement, was held, on Mr Parnell's invitation, at the New York Hotel in this

city, on Thursday, the 11th March, for the purpose of taking counsel as to the best means of furthering the cause of land reform in Ireland. After a thorough discussion of the subject, it was decided that an Irish Land League should be formed in the United States for the purpose of rendering moral and financial aid to the Irish National Land League of Ireland. The resolutions herewith enclosed, and the statements of the objects of the Irish Land League, will explain the action already taken.

"Pending the complete organisation of the American branch of the League, and the election of a representative Central Council, the Conference decided that the supervision and direction of the movement should be entrusted to a Provisional Central Council, to be appointed by Mr Parnell, aided in his choice by the advice of a committee appointed by the Conference. On account of Mr Parnell's hasty departure for Ireland, he found it necessary to depute the selection of this Provisional Central Council to the committee appointed by the Conference. That committee held several meetings, and at its final gathering at Mott Memorial Hall, in New York, on Sunday the 21st of March, the names of the following gentlemen, many of whom were suggested by Mr Parnell, were unanimously selected as the Provisional Central Council of the Irish Land League of the United States. [Here occur the names selected.]

"After the appointment of a sub-committee of seven for the purpose of notifying the gentlemen elected, and arranging for a meeting of the Provisional Central Council, the committee adjourned *sine die*.

"We, the undersigned members of the sub-committee, have therefore the honour to inform you that you have been duly elected a member of the Provisional Central Council of the Irish Land League of America, and to request the favour, at your earliest convenience, of a reply, stating your acceptance or declination of the position, and the time and the place which you would find most convenient for a meeting of the Council. We enclose blank for that purpose.—Very respectfully,

"T. J. KEARNEY, M.D., *Chairman*.

"DAVID T. LYNCH, *Secretary*.

"THOMAS J. BYRNE, *Treasurer*.

"JAMES W. O'BRIEN,

"STEPHEN J. MEANY,

"JOHN DEVROY,

"J. C. M'GUIRE,

} *Committee."*



The other great cities were not far behind New York. Meetings were held, and organisations on the basis of the rules of the New York central body were formed. In Boston, on April 15, a great meeting was held in Faneuil Hall, at which Mr John Dillon spoke. After the meeting, some hundreds of those present handed in their names as Land Leaguers, and subsequently held a meeting and appointed Hon. P. A. Collins chairman, with P. J. Flatley and P. J. O'Daly as secretaries, and the following committee to perfect plans for a permanent organisation of the League: Messrs Patrick Donahoe, M. F. Lynch, Thos. O'Flynn, John Tighe, Thos. E. Lambert, John J. Hayes, and D. B. Cashman. The organisation was perfected at a meeting in John A. Andrew Hall, April 23.

Michael Davitt left Ireland on Sunday, May 10, for the United States, as the representative of the Irish National Land League, to assist, with Mr John Dillon, in the organisation of the League throughout the States. He arrived just in time to attend the first National Convention of the Central Provisional Council, which was held in Trenor Hall, New York, on May 18, pursuant to a call issued by the sub-committee of seven. The Convention was opened by Mr John C. M'Guire, of Brooklyn, N. Y., when Mr John Boyle O'Reilly, of Boston, was elected temporary chairman. On taking the chair, Mr O'Reilly delivered the following address:—

"He who should strike the true tone for the Land League of America must be one who looked over the whole field of Irish political, social, and industrial interests, and who should speak a word to linger in the mind and smelt into harmony every healthy element of the race. This Convention was essentially one of unification. To-day, with millions in America, Irish nationality was only a sentiment. To-morrow it should be a system. The duty of the Convention was to reduce into operative form the best aspirations and principles of the people. When this is done, a danger is averted. It is wiser to follow organised principles than to follow men, however excellent they be. When the masses follow men, they may be dangerous to their enemy; when they follow principles, they become terrible. Impotent action breeds contempt and pity. Too much of Ireland's national action has been futile and impotent. It is time to reduce the fight to reason and science, and take advantage of every opportunity. Ireland must plead her case and make her charges against her powerful enemy—not in the dark, where she may

be strangled and gagged, as heretofore—but in the market place, before the world.”

P. A. Collins, of Boston, was subsequently elected permanent president of the Convention; Rev. S. Cronin, Buffalo, first vice-president; Patrick Madden, of Peoria, treasurer; and Dr R. Shields, Westchester, N. Y., secretary. The Convention adopted the following resolutions:—

“WHEREAS, a famine has been raging in Ireland for the past six months, and at the present moment hundreds of thousands of the people are being fed by the charity of foreign nations; and whereas, the terrible national affliction is of periodical recurrence, we deem it our duty to declare our conviction that these famines do not arise from natural causes, but are the results of bad laws enacted by the English Government and maintained despite the Irish people. Therefore, be it

“*Resolved*, That it is the duty of every Irishman to aid to the utmost of his ability all honourable effort made by the Irish people to free themselves from these ruinous laws.

“*Resolved*, That we regard the present system of land tenure in Ireland as one of the chief causes of famine, and of the chronic poverty and oppression which prevails in that country.

“*Resolved*, That the National Land League of Ireland, having appealed to the Irish of America to assist them in removing the cause of poverty, we hereby pledge the earnest co-operation of this organisation to the Irish Land League, in the work of abolishing the present English land system, and establishing a peasant proprietary in Ireland.

“*Resolved*, That, while prepared to aid the Irish Land League to the utmost of our ability, we desire to place on record our conviction that the kindred interests of manufacturing, mining, fisheries, and commerce are also being protracted by deliberate and wickedly selfish restrictive legislation, and that poverty must remain the normal condition of the Irish people until they recognise the power to regulate and protect these interests.”

The board of officers elected by the Convention for the National Organisation were: President, James J. McCafferty, Lowell, Mass.; Vice-President, William Purcell, Rochester, N. Y.; Treasurer, Rev. Lawrence Walsh, Waterbury, Conn.; Recording Secretary, Michael Davitt; Council—Thaddeus Flanagan, San Francisco; Lawrence Harmon, Peoria, Ill.; Wm. Carroll, Philadelphia; James Gibson, Paterson, N. J.;

J. O. Reddy, Richmond, Va.; P. K. Walsh, Cincinnati; and M. E. Welsh, Providence, R. I.

The Central Council was instructed to meet regularly once in three months to pass on all questions of discipline and adjust disturbances in the branches of the League, and to fix the time for general conventions. A general Convention was directed to be held once a year. To it each branch having 300 members or under was entitled to send a delegate, and each branch having over 300 delegates to send an additional delegate. The initiation fee was fixed at one dollar, and the annual fees not more than one dollar.

After Mr John Dillon had delivered a speech, in which he gave an account of his three months' labours in America, Mr Davitt was called for by the Convention. In response, he delivered the following address:—

“My first duty is to thank this Convention for the privilege of being present. I feel proud to find so many able and intelligent men earnestly working to help us in destroying landlordism. This movement extends from Dublin to San Francisco. It is a good omen that it will succeed when it reaches out so far and interests so many, and a sign that it will not fail like other movements. I am happy to say that the Land League movement in Ireland is in capital hands and trim, after a series of successes during the past six months. But these successes are only indicative of what is to come. While satisfied with them, we cannot still be content. We have succeeded all along the line, and what we have already done is a guarantee of what the future has in store. By your action to-day you have widened the programme outlined by the Land League in Ireland; but, although we omitted the Industrial question from the movement, it was not because we were unaware of its importance, or of the evils which Ireland's commerce suffers through unjust laws.

“I can assure you now, that the addition which you have made to the platform to-day will be accepted by the Irish people on the other side. *As the movement for the abolition of the Irish landlord system was first started here*, I am glad that this later addition to it is made here also. I thank you warmly, on behalf of the Irish people and the Land League, for the magnificent support you have given them in the past, and for your generous preparations for the future. With such aid we will soon dispose of the greatest enemy to Ireland's welfare and progress. The organisation of land leagues is now going on rapidly in the

four provinces; and I am happy to say that the farmers in Ulster are following the example of those of Leinster, Connaught, and Munster in the grand work. The plan we work on is simple. We resort to every fair means to pull down and destroy the tyrant landlordism, and to trample it in the dust of its own rottenness. We cannot do it by parliamentary action alone, and we don't propose to confine ourselves to that means. What we propose is that the action of our men in Parliament shall be the reflex of the work going on in Ireland. It is an action of no compromise, and no man going to the House of Commons can say that our people will be satisfied with fixity of tenure or other mild reforms.

"There are two means which we pursue to accomplish our end. The first is a policy of destruction by hammering against landlordism. We are satisfied with nothing but its total abolition. In the House of Commons we pursue a constructive policy, so that you will be able to reconcile the speeches in Ireland against landlordism, and the speeches in the House which might not seem to be in keeping with those delivered by members of the same party in Ireland. If a landlord evicts a tenant, then the Land League takes action in the courts against him; and in every case, so far, we have won a victory. I don't think, in the face of the feeling prevailing at present in Ireland, that many wholesale evictions will take place, and I don't think a Liberal Government could afford to permit them. We aim to impress the farmers with the necessity of refusing to take any farm from which another tenant has been evicted, nor to bid for any cattle sold for rent. As an instance, a farmer named Reddington had his cattle seized for rent; but previous to the seizure he branded their horns with the words, 'rack-rent.' When the sale took place there were few bidders, although many persons attended, and the cattle were sold for one-third of their value.

"In conclusion, let me say, gentlemen, that the people of Ireland are full of confidence in you, and I think, from what I have seen here to-day, that they will not be mistaken. I can pledge to you their warmest gratitude for the sinews of war which you have furnished them to fight their great battle."

The Convention adjourned, after having placed the national movement of America on a solid foundation, on which has since been built throughout the Union over eleven hundred branches.

that are weekly sending to Ireland large amounts of money for the prosecution of the crusade against landlordism.

On Sunday, May 23, a reception was given to Mr Davitt, in Jones' Wood, New York, at which Mrs Parnell, the honoured and patriotic mother of Charles Stewart Parnell, and her daughter, Miss Fanny Parnell, were present. The following is an extract from the speech delivered on that occasion by Mr Davitt:—

“I speak to-day in the hearing of an illustrious Irishwoman, the mother of an illustrious Irishman, and cannot allow myself to be placed before him, the leader and the guiding spirit to whom is due the series of successes scored during the past year. The problem before us when we organised was simple, and our platform contains this single plank—the destruction of landlordism and the winning of the land for the people, to whom it belongs. The Irish League includes all parties—Nationalists, Moderates, Home Rulers, Repealers, and all sects—Catholics and Protestants meeting in council to work until Ireland's social rights are won, and her enemy struck down for ever. We work by teaching peasants and all people that the land was made for them, and not for 10,000 lazy Englishmen; that, if they allow themselves to be trampled upon, they are worthy of oppression, and that they are to rely on themselves alone and not upon foreign or hostile legislators. Together with this system of instruction, we warn them not to despise the honest efforts in their behalf of Irishmen in Parliament, and that no principle is sacrificed by recognising the courageous fight of Parnell. When the people of Ireland find that united they can strike down rack-rents and prevent evictions while their friends labour in legislation, they can herald the day when these abuses will be swept away for ever.

“We ask your aid, moral and material. We mean to attack the system openly and fairly, unscrupulous though our enemy be. We want you, too, to be united—you who hope to see Ireland a nation; and you who think she is too weak for that, but still desire her independence.”

Davitt now went to work to build up the League throughout the States. His first official act as Secretary of the Irish National Land and Industrial League was to have issued to the “Irish race in America” an address from the Council of the League, which bore his signature as Central Secretary, with those of the other officers. In this address occurred the following paragraphs, showing how the Land League expected its

supporters in America to aid the objects of the home organisation :—

“ *First.*—By enlightening American public opinion as to the working of the Landlord System, and by exposing through the columns of the American press the oppressions and outrages which are practised on the tenant-farmers of Ireland.

“ *Second.*—By the immense moral influence which their support exerts on the people at home, encouraging them to be steadfast in the struggle, and not to give way to despair.

“ *Third.*—By contributing sufficient means to enable the League to carry on the movement in Ireland on such a scale as is necessary to insure success.”

And also the following purposes for which assistance was asked in America :—

“ Up to the present,” said the document, “ through want of money, the League has been obliged to confine its operations chiefly to a few counties. The purposes for which funds are needed are :—

“ *First.*—To enable the League to spread its organisation throughout the thirty-two counties of Ireland.

“ *Second.*—Pending the abolition of landlordism, to aid local branches of the Land League to defend in the courts such farmers as may be served with processes of ejectment, and thus enable them to obstruct such landlords as avail themselves of the poverty of the tenantry and the machinery of the law to exterminate the victims of the existing system.

“ *Third.*—To enable the League to afford protection to those who are unjustly evicted. Already the League has been obliged to undertake the support of the families of the men who were recently sentenced to imprisonment for resisting eviction in one of the famine districts, and it is now supporting evicted families.

“ *Fourth.*—To oppose the supporters of landlordism whenever and wherever they endeavour to obtain any representative position in Ireland which would be the means of aiding them in prolonging the existence of the present land laws and perpetuating the social degradation and misery of our people.”

Mr Davitt was now unceasing in his exertions in establishing branches. He visited a great many cities all through the

country, leaving perfected organisations after him wherever he went, and arousing the people to greater exertions; so that, along with the large sums weekly sent from America to aid the starving people, very considerable amounts began also to be sent for League purposes; the Irish National Land League being particular to expend for the relief of distress the money sent for that purpose, not touching a cent for League objects except what was specifically mentioned as being intended for such.

The noble conduct of America during this terrible famine crisis in Ireland will ever be written on the memory of the Irish race in letters of gold, and in significant contrast to the callous and mean conduct of the British Government in treating the distress. The *Constellation*, which sailed on March 28, laden with America's practical bounty for the starving people, was met on her arrival in Queenstown, April 20, by a Royal Duke, and a British Admiral with his war ship. They became so officious in *helping* the mode of distribution of the cargo as to almost give the impression that the relief ship and the food had come from England, instead of from the United States; and they certainly *did* filch a great share of the credit of that transaction. England is mean enough to rob a beggarman, and refuse him an alms out of the plunder.

An important event occurred some time after Mr Parnell's return to Ireland. The elections had resulted favourably to the supporters of the Land League, and the active section in Parliament was considerably increased. At a conference of the Irish parliamentary party, held in May, Mr Parnell was elected leader, instead of Mr Shaw. This position of prominence to Mr Parnell was of the utmost importance to the furtherance of the objects of the League, which were placed in the forefront of all questions emanating from the party. It also guaranteed that the people's fight against the landlords would be vigorously prosecuted in the House, until suitable legislation on the subject would have been obtained.

In the beginning of July, Mr Foster, Chief Secretary for Ireland, introduced a relief bill into Parliament, entitled, "The Compensation for Disturbance (Ireland) Bill." The bill met with great opposition even from some members of Gladstone's Cabinet—one of whom, the Marquis of Lansdowne, the owner of 135,500 acres in Ireland, resigned his position as under-secretary for India, in consequence. In the debate on the bill, July 5, Mr Gladstone said:—

"The greater part of the opposition to the bill was a revival of smouldering hostility to the Land Act. The bill must be judged from the standpoint of the Land Act, which created for the tenant an interest in the land, and improved the value, though it interfered with property. Evictions, he said, were lamentably increasing; and it was necessary to employ a large number of police to enforce processes. Such a state of things nearly approached danger of civil war, and it was therefore necessary to take measures to prevent a serious crisis. The best means to combat anti-rent agitation was to remove justification for agitation."

The bill finally passed the Commons, but was killed in the House of Lords by a vote of 282 to 51. The landlord influence was at work in the aristocratic "Upper House," and succeeded in inducing the "titled idlers" to strangle the bill.

For the portion of the year up to July 1, 1880, 1696 evictions were reported in Ireland, distributed as follows: In Ulster, 552; in Munster, 495; in Leinster, 417; and in Connaught, 232. This would represent about 8000 people who were thrown on the roadside by the landlords. After that date, owing to the thoroughness of the Land League organisation, the ejectments considerably decreased.

Davitt travelled much, and worked hard through the summer months, in organising branches throughout the West; and in the early part of September he was attacked with nervous fever, in Omaha, Nebraska, brought on by overtaking his brain and physical powers. The gigantic work which he accomplished within a year was sufficient to break down a much stronger man. He soon rallied, however, and continued his tour to the Pacific coast, where he lectured in the chief towns. On September 21, an address from "the reformers of the West to Michael Davitt, the persecuted agitator and heroic apostle of the new civilisation," was presented to him, in San Francisco, by Denis Kearney. The address abounded in the peculiar figures of speech for which Kearney was celebrated. Davitt's satirical reply was a hit which Denis should remember and profit by. He said:—

"To 'agitator' I make no objection, as every reformer must stir up and agitate the mass of his people if they are to achieve the object for which they struggle; but as to the title of 'heroic apostle of the new civilisation,' I can lay no particle of claim as I am *too* irreverent for the dignity of an apostle, and



too ignorant of what is to constitute the new civilisation you credit me with propagating. I am fond of old names, about the meaning of which there can be no mistake, and I am of opinion that there is no advantage gained for the cause of reform by enveloping ideas or clothing principles in ambiguous or new-fangled language."

A new and novel feature in the agitation occurred in October. On the 15th of that month, Miss Fanny Parnell, assisted by other patriotic ladies, called a meeting in the New York Hotel, at which about fifty ladies were present. The meeting organised the "Ladies' Land League of New York," and appointed the following officers:—President, Mrs D. T. Stewart Parnell; Vice-President, Miss Ellen Ford; Financial Secretary, Miss Fanny Parnell; Treasurer, Mrs Andrew Maguire; Recording Secretary, Miss Mary E. Maguire; Corresponding Secretary, Miss Jane Byrne. The Ladies' League has since been wonderfully developed by the untiring energy of Mrs Parnell and Miss Ellen Ford. Its branches are spreading out in all directions where exists the National Land League, and Miss Anna Parnell has established a large number of branches in several counties in Ireland.

The news from Ireland that the Government was to indict Mr Parnell and the other Land League leaders brought Mr Davitt again to the East, determined to start at once for Ireland. Mr Parnell and the Executive of the League requested Mr Davitt to remain in the States, where his services would have been invaluable; but this he positively refused to do, saying that where there was danger there his post should be. Just before his departure for Ireland an immense meeting, organised by the Ladies' Land League, was held in New York, and presided over by the president, Mrs Parnell. At this meeting, Mr Davitt delivered his last address in America.

He arrived in Queenstown on Saturday, November 20, and two days afterwards spoke at a Land League demonstration held at Mallow. In his speech, he gave the following temperate advice:—He said he understood the temper of the American people pretty well, and he believed that the late acts of agrarian violence in Ireland had done the Land League cause much harm in the United States. While he knew that the Land League was not, and could not, be held responsible in any way for these outrages, he would urge upon its members to use every effort to prevent a recurrence of them, if they wished

to retain American sympathy. Such an organisation as the Land League was the only one that could remove the terrible incubus of landlordism. The League, like the Government, desired the security of life and property; but, unlike the Government, it desired it for millions instead of for a few.

A great deal of excitement was caused all through Ireland, early in November, by the war on "Captain" Boycott—an Englishman, agent for Lord Erne. Boycott's residence was at Lough Mask House, near Ballinrobe, County Mayo. He was an agent of the worst type, and had had difficulties with his work-people, which showed him to be a paltry, mean-souled fellow. The culmination of the trouble arose out of his having ejectment notices served on Lord Erne's tenants. A body of police were protecting the process-server when serving the writs. The people attacked the party, who retreated and found refuge in Lough Mask House. Next day the whole side of the country struck against Boycott, and reduced him and his family to a state of siege. His servants were ordered to leave him, and they did so. No person could be hired to do a hand's-turn for the Englishman. A party of Orangemen were then organised, which, protected by a large force of military, proceeded to Lough Mask to save the agent's crops that were rotting in the ground for want of harvesting. When the crops were gathered, the Orangemen, with Boycott and his family, surrounded by the small army of horse, foot, and artillery sent to protect them, left that part of the country, amid the groans and hootings of the people. The "Captain" left Lough Mask with a whole skin, owing to the advice of the Land League to the people. It is not likely that he will soon again visit that section. This was a caution to other land agents in the West. Shortly afterwards thirteen landlords, agents, and others were "Boycotted" at Knockamore, a village near Walshtown, and from that time "Boycotting" has become a wonderful power in the hands of the people. It completely ostracises a man from communication with his neighbours. No one will buy or sell to him, or perform his work. It was just the weapon needed to scourge the enemies of the people "inside the law," and it has proved more effective than bullets.

The Gladstone Government had now determined on a vigorous crusade against the Land League, which had become powerful enough to shake the foundations of Irish landlordism.

Its commands and decrees were religiously obeyed by the people. When Mr Parnell was in America there were only thirty branches of the League in Ireland, and they were very weak. There were, in December, 1880, fully five hundred, and in each branch about two hundred paying members were enrolled, making altogether one hundred thousand paying recruits under its flag.

The Government began its skirmishing against the League by arresting Messrs Healy and Walsh, who were tried for sedition at the Cork Assizes, December 15, and acquitted by the jury after one hour's deliberation. More troops were being daily drafted into Ireland, with immense quantities of war material, including 20,000 rounds of buck-shot from Woolwich, as landlord pills, to be given the people with the ejectment writs; in case the latter was refused, the former were to be administered.

On Tuesday evening, November 2, indictments were lodged by the Government against Messrs Parnell, Dillon, Biggar, Timothy O'Sullivan, Sexton, Egan, Brennan, Malachy O'Sullivan, Boyton, Gordon Harris, Nally, Welsh, and Sheridan for conspiracy. They comprised nineteen counts, including preventing payment of rent, defeating legal process, and obstructing the letting of farms and exciting hatred.

The trials began in Dublin on December 28. The line of defence, which was sketched by Michael Davitt, was to deny the League's responsibility for agrarian outrages, and to fortify the denial by quoting press statements; also, to show that, notwithstanding the sufferings and distress through which the country had passed, the percentage of attacks on individuals was unusually small. The State trials lasted twenty-eight days, and on January 25, 1881, when the jury came into court, the foreman stated that it was impossible for them to agree, whereupon they were discharged; a juror previously stated that ten stood for acquittal, against two for conviction.

The Government, anticipating the failure to suppress the agitation through the law courts, determined to suspend the Constitution, and strangle the agitation by the brute force of coercion. Accordingly, the day before the acquittal of the traversers—on January 24, 1881—the Coercion Bill, now in force, entitled, a "Bill for the Protection of Life and Property in Ireland," was introduced in the House of Commons. Under its provisions any person may be arrested and thrown into prison, to remain there until the 30th of September, 1882,

without trial or appeal, on the mere suspicion of a policeman or magistrate. Under this infamous Act a large number of the principal organisers of the Land League have since been arrested and consigned to Kilmainham and Galway prisons. The active section of the Irish party in Parliament gallantly fought the Coercion Bill, step by step, through all its stages, and were so successful in obstructing its passage through the House that the Government had to resort to the *clôture* gag, and expel them from the House of Commons before it was possible for it to pass. The British Parliament destroyed, by this act, its boasted independence, a member being at present completely at the mercy of the Speaker, who at any time may "name him," and have him suspended during the sitting.

After Mr Davitt's departure for Ireland, the National Land League in America was left without an executive head, by the disappearance, rather suddenly and unexpectedly, of its President, James J. M'Cafferty, of Lowell. A convention was therefore convened at Buffalo, N.Y., on January 13, and the following Board of Officers elected:—President, P. A. Collins, of Boston; Vice-presidents, Rev. P. Cronin, of Buffalo; Major T. P. Powderly, of Scranton, Penn.; Treasurer, Rev. Lawrence Walsh, of Waterbury, Conn.; Secretary, Thomas Flatley, of Boston.

## CHAPTER XIV.

DAVITT ARRESTED—AGAIN IN A CONVICT'S GARB—PORTLAND PRISON DESCRIBED—THE TICKET-OF-LEAVE—THE NEWS IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS—EXPULSION OF THIRTY-FOUR MEMBERS—THE NATIONAL LAND LEAGUE CONVENTION—NO PEACE IN IRELAND WHILE DAVITT IS IN A CONVICT'S CELL.

" Though the Saxon snake unfold  
At thy feet his scales of gold,  
And vow thee love untold,  
Trust him not, Green Land !  
Touch not with gloveless clasp  
A coiled and deadly asp,  
But with strong and guarded grasp  
In your steel-clad hand !"

R. D. WILLIAMS.

MICHAEL DAVITT ARRESTED ! was flashed through the Atlantic wires, February 3, 1881. The mean and vindictive *Liberal* (!)

Government, foiled by Parnell and his colleagues in its purpose of rushing through Parliament the Coercion Bill, had pounced on the leader of a people struggling to free themselves from an oppression condemned by the same Government, and flung him back into a convict cell, into the company of the scum of British crime. Gladstone and Forster, while pretending sympathy to the wronged and suffering millions in Ireland, were tying up their victim with coercion cords, that they might the more easily vent their brutal malice on the agitators. The Irish law courts refused to convict the Land League leaders; therefore the British Government suspended the law, to punish the people who were bold enough to demand their God-given rights. Davitt, the noble-hearted, gifted, and honoured champion of his country's cause against oppression, who had already suffered long years of torture, dragged back to a British dungeon on a contemptible pretext of having violated the terms of his ticket-of-leave—the civilised world cried shame! on the miserable tyrants who could stoop to so paltry a trick of *State policy* to serve an ignoble purpose. Mr Davitt's arrest was effected in the following manner:—On Thursday, February 3, Mr Davitt had been working at the League offices with the Ladies' Relief Committee, who were busy getting out their addresses to the Irish people. Between two and three o'clock he left the offices to dine. With him were Mr Brennan, the Secretary of the League, and Mr Matthew Harris, of Ballinasloe—both of them defendants in the recent State trial. They walked down Sackville Street, and were crossing O'Connell Bridge, when a detective officer named Sherridan approached Mr Davitt and said, "Mr Davitt, you are wanted at the Castle." Mr Davitt said good-bye to his friends, and walked to the Castle with the officer. There he was taken in charge by two English detectives, who told him that they had orders for his arrest, on the ground of breach of the conditions of his ticket-of-leave. He at once yielded to circumstances, and handed over his revolver, requesting the chief detective to give it to Mr Brennan. About half an hour afterward, Mr Brennan went to the detective office at the Castle and asked Superintendent Mallon, chief of the detective force, what had become of Davitt. Mallon refused to give information, and simply stated that English detectives had taken him away in a cab a few minutes previously.

The detectives—Chief Superintendent Williamson and detective officer Swanston—drove with their prisoner in a cab

to Kingstown, where they went on board the mail steamer *Connaught*, and sailed for England that evening. To Dr Kenny, who obtained an interview with him before the boat sailed, Mr Davitt said that the Government had done a cowardly act and committed a gross blunder. Mr Michael Davitt arrived in London on Friday morning, February 4, when passage was taken from Kingstown to Euston. There was a considerable assembly on the arrival platform at Euston; but, to avoid any demonstration, Superintendent Williamson, who had eight or nine officers with him, alighted at Willesden Junction with Mr Davitt, and proceeded to Broad Street, whence they drove to Bow Street, where the prisoner was lodged until his appearance before the sitting magistrate. A pilot engine preceded the train which brought Mr Davitt to London. Upon reaching Bow Street, arrangements were made that Mr Davitt should be immediately taken before the sitting magistrate. Sir James Ingham was in attendance, and at once proceeded to hear the case. The evidence consisted simply of the production, by Superintendent Williamson, of the warrant, and the evidence of that officer that the prisoner was the same Michael Davitt who was convicted at the Central Criminal Court on July 11, 1870. The prisoner wished to put some questions regarding the reason of the revoking of the licence; but he was informed that that was no question for the magistrate, who had simply to ascertain that he was the convict whose licence had been revoked. Sir J. Ingham thereupon signed a warrant for the committal of the prisoner to Millbank, to which prison he was at once conveyed, escorted in a similar way to that on his arrival at the court.

Michael Davitt, in charge of a party of detectives, left Millbank Prison on Saturday morning, February 5, and proceeded by the quarter to six train from Waterloo, which arrived at Weymouth just before noon. They travelled in a special first-class carriage, scarcely any one appearing to know, at either the departure or arrival station, who the occupants were. When the train arrived at Weymouth, one of the platform porters, as usual, was about to open the door, not knowing who was in the carriage, when one of the officers requested him to wait a few minutes, and then, when most of the passengers had left, the party emerged and proceeded to a carriage. Davitt was not dressed in convict uniform, and walked with a bold, defiant air to the carriage, which immediately drove off; and before two o'clock he was lodged in Portland Prison, not

a dozen individuals being aware of it. A report said he looked haggard and pale. The authorities at the prison have received orders to use the greatest vigilance and care, the sentries and guards being considerably increased; whilst the police and military had full instructions how to act, should any emergency arise. Strangers were closely scrutinised, and no one was allowed to loiter near the prison without being challenged.

"Mr Davitt's transfer to Portland," said a correspondent, writing to an Irish newspaper, "removes him to the spot as 'far from the busy haunts of men' as any which can possibly be conceived within the limits of the British islands. It is not so inaccessible as Dartmoor, where the convicts are lodged upon the highest of the bleak tablelands of humid Devon; but the solitude is equally depressing, and to a man of active temperament must be terrible in its intensity. Upon a map of the British Isles you may see," he says, "off the county of Dorset, a place not much bigger than a pin's head, which, if marked at all, is described as the Isle of Portland. This, however, is not correct; it is not an island, but a peninsula, joined to the mainland by an extraordinary formation known as the Chisel Beach—an enormous ridge of pebbles which, in the course of thousands of years, has been thrown up by the sea. Along the base of this natural breakwater runs the railway connecting Portland with Weymouth. It is a single narrow-gauge line; the accomplishment of the journey takes twenty minutes, and there is a little station named Rodwell half-way between the twain. Standing upon the parade at Weymouth on a summer evening, and listening to the music of the bands which never fail to enliven life at a fashionable watering-place, it is difficult to believe that, in yonder rocky islet, hundreds of desperadoes are confined in what to them must be a living tomb; for upon the portals of that grim prison might appropriately enough be inscribed the words of Dante, '*Abandon hope, all ye who enter here!*' Leaving Weymouth by the little railway, after passing Rodwell, you seem suddenly to have lost sight of civilisation; for scarcely a sound is to be heard beyond the deep diapason of the sea. Landing at Portland, at a primitive village called Castletown, you find yourself at the base of a precipitous hill, at the top of which stands the convict prison. On a hot day Bunyan's Hill of Difficulty is nothing to this toilsome ascent. There is not a tree or a shrub in the whole of the peninsula; so that shade

amid the noontide heat is impossible. Standing upon the summit of that acclivity on a hot day, and looking down upon the West Bay, solitary amid the activity which marks the great highway of the Channel, one is irresistibly reminded of Tennyson's description of Enoch Arden's place of exile—

'The blaze upon the waters to the east,  
The blaze upon the island overhead,  
The blaze upon the waters to the west,  
Then the great stars that globed themselves in heaven,  
The hollow-bellowing ocean, and again  
The scarlet shafts of sunlight—but no sail.'

Portland is one vast mass of stone, where the quarries have been worked for centuries; and, so far as convict labour is applied to them, very hard work it is. Wherever the eye turns, there is no relief from the white, blinding aspect which meets the view. Houses, hedges, garden walls, roads, hills, valleys,—all are of stone. The free population of the peninsula subsists in seven isolated and scattered villages, each lonely in its desolation; and close outside the prison walls is the loneliest of these—the village of Reform. Previously to my day of toil over Portland, I had always thought the Island of Sark was about the quietest place in the creation; but Sark possesses the advantage of luxuriant vegetation, while Portland is a mere arid rock. Even a free man gets away from it with a feeling of relief, and with an idea that he would rather dwell in the midst of alarms than live in that horrible place."

Such is the present abode of Michael Davitt, the life and soul of the Irish National Land League, and the organiser of the greatest agitation ever witnessed in Ireland.

The following is a copy of the ticket-of-leave that furnished the pretext for the arrest. *Apropos* of this ticket-of-leave, the following were the reasons why Mr Davitt did not report monthly at the nearest police-station, which was the regulation not complied with:—When Mr Davitt and Messrs Chambers, M'Carthy, and O'Brien were released, a compact was entered into between them that they should observe the regulations so long as any of the political prisoners were kept in custody; but, when the remaining prisoners were amnestied, they did not feel themselves longer obliged to comply with the rules, and they acted accordingly.



## MICHAEL DAVITT'S "TICKET-OF-LEAVE."



ORDER OF LICENCE TO A CONVICT MADE UNDER THE STATUTES 16 AND 17 VICT., C. 99, S. 9, AND 27 AND 28 VICT., C. 47, S. 4.

WHITEHALL,  
19th day of December, 1878.

HER MAJESTY is graciously pleased to grant to *Michael Davitt*, who was convicted of *Treason-Felony* at the *Central Criminal Court*, holden in the *City of London* on the 20th day of *July, 1870*, and was then and there sentenced to be kept in Penal Servitude for the term of *fifteen years*, and is now confined in *Dartmoor Prison*,

Her Royal Licence to be at large from the day of his liberation under this order, during the remaining portion of his said term of Penal Servitude, unless the said *Michael Davitt* shall, before the expiration of the said term, be convicted of some indictable offence within the United Kingdom, in which case such licence will be immediately forfeited by law, or unless it shall please her Majesty sooner to revoke or alter such licence.

This licence is given subject to the conditions endorsed upon the same, upon the breach of any of which it shall be liable to be revoked, whether such breach is followed by a conviction or not.

And her Majesty hereby orders that the said *Michael Davitt* be set at liberty within Thirty Days from the date of this Order.

Given under my hand and seal.

Signed,

*R. A. Cross.*

TRUE COPY.  
LICENCE TO BE AT LARGE. }

*E. F. DuCane,*  
Chairman of the Directors of  
Convict Prisons. }

**THIS LICENCE WILL BE FORFEITED IF THE HOLDER DOES NOT OBSERVE THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS.**

The holder shall preserve his licence, and produce it when called upon to do so by a Magistrate or Police Officer.

He shall abstain from any violation of the law.

He shall not habitually associate with notoriously bad characters, such as reputed thieves and prostitutes.

He shall not lead an idle and dissolute life, without visible means of obtaining an honest livelihood.

If this licence is forfeited or revoked in consequence of a conviction for any offence, he will be liable to undergo a Term of Penal Servitude equal to the portion of his term of fifteen years which remained unexpired when his licence was granted.

The attention of the licence-holder is directed to the following provisions of "The Prevention of Crimes Act, 1871."

If it appear from the facts proved before a court of summary jurisdiction that there are reasonable grounds for believing that the convict so brought before it is getting his livelihood by dishonest means, such convict shall be deemed to be guilty of an offence against the Prevention of Crimes Act, and his licence shall be forfeited.

Every holder of a licence granted under the Penal Servitude Acts, who is at large in Great Britain or Ireland, shall notify the place of his residence to the chief officer of police of the district in which his residence is situated, and shall, whenever he changes such residence within the same police district, notify such change to the chief officer of police of that district, and whenever he changes his residence from one police district to another, shall notify such change of residence to the chief officer of police of the police district which he is leaving, and to the chief officer of police of the police district into which he goes to reside; moreover, every male holder of such a licence as aforesaid shall, once in each month, report himself at such time as may be prescribed by the chief officer of police of the district in which such holder may be, either to such chief officer himself or to such other person as that officer may direct, and such report may, according as such chief officer directs, be required to be made personally or by letter.

If any holder of a licence, who is at large in Great Britain or Ireland, remains in any place for forty-eight hours without notifying the place of his residence to the chief officer of police of the district in which such place is situated, or fails to comply

with the requisitions of this section on the occasion of any change of residence, or with the requisitions of this section as to reporting himself once in each month, he shall in every such case, unless he proves to the satisfaction of the court before whom he is tried that he did his best to act in conformity with the law, be guilty of an offence against the Prevention of Crimes Act, and, upon conviction thereof, his licence may, in the discretion of the court, be forfeited; or if the term of Penal Servitude in respect of which his licence was granted has expired, at the date of his conviction, it shall be lawful for the court to sentence him to imprisonment, with or without hard labour, for a term not exceeding one year; or if the said term of Penal Servitude has not expired but the remainder unexpired thereof is a lesser period than one year, then to sentence him to imprisonment, with or without hard labour, to commence at the expiration of the said term of Penal Servitude, for such a term as, together with the remainder unexpired of his said term of Penal Servitude, will not exceed one year.

Where any person is convicted on indictment of a crime, and a previous conviction of a crime is proved against him, he shall, at any time within seven years, immediately after the expiration of the sentence passed on him for the last of such crimes, be guilty of an offence against the Prevention of Crimes Act, and be liable to imprisonment with or without hard labour, for a term not exceeding one year, under the following circumstances or any of them :—

**FIRST.** If, on his being charged by a constable with getting his livelihood by dishonest means, and being brought before a court of summary jurisdiction, it appears to such court that there are reasonable grounds for believing that the person so charged is getting his livelihood by dishonest means; or,

**SECONDLY.** If on being charged with any offence punishable on indictment or summary conviction, and on being required by a court of summary jurisdiction to give his name and address he refuses to do so, or gives a false name or a false address; or,

**THIRDLY.** If he is found in any place, whether public or private, under such circumstances as to satisfy the court before whom he is brought, that he was about to commit or to aid in the commission of any offence punishable on indictment or summary conviction, or was waiting for an

opportunity to commit or aid in the commission of any offence punishable on indictment or summary conviction; or,

FOURTHLY. If he is found in or upon any dwelling-house, or any building, yard, or premises, being parcel of or attached to such dwelling-house, or in or upon any shop, warehouse, counting-house, or other place of business, or in any garden, orchard, pleasure-ground, or nursery-ground, or in any building or erection in any garden, orchard, pleasure-ground, or nursery-ground, without being able to account to the satisfaction of the court before whom he is brought for his being found on such premises.

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Mr Davitt's arrest caused intense excitement and indignation in Ireland, England, and America. When the news of the arrest was announced in the House of Commons, it was received with "howls, cheering, and signs of uproarious joy" by "the first assembly of gentlemen in the world." Then occurred, on February 3, the memorable scene of the expulsion of thirty-four Irish members for denouncing this infamous act of tyranny.

In reply to Mr Parnell, Sir William Vernon Harcourt, who signed the warrant of arrest, said that Mr Davitt had been arrested in consequence of having violated one of the conditions of his ticket-of-leave.

Mr Parnell—What conditions?

No reply being made, angry cries of "Answer, answer, answer!" came from the Irish benches. Mr Gladstone then rose, and Mr Dillon also stood up simultaneously, amid the most terrible din and cries of "Shame, shame!"

Mr Gladstone said—"I rise, sir, in conformity with the notice I gave yesterday."

Mr Dillon—Mr Speaker! Mr Speaker!

The Speaker—The right honourable gentleman is in possession of the House.

Mr-Dillon continued to stand with his arms folded.

The Speaker—I call upon the honourable member to resume his seat.

Cries of "Name, name!"

Mr Dillon continued to stand, the Irish members crying, "Point of order!" Mr Gladstone then moved that the honourable member be suspended during the remainder of this day's

sitting. The Speaker then put the motion from the chair, amidst cries of "Privilege!" and "Order!"

Mr A. M. Sullivan—Mr Dillon rose to a point of order. I object to the division.

The House then divided. For the suspension there were 395; against there were 33. Majority, 362.

The Speaker—Mr Dillon will withdraw.

Mr Dillon—I beg—

The Speaker—The honourable member must withdraw.

Mr Dillon—I decline to withdraw.

The Speaker directed the Sergeant-at-Arms to remove Mr Dillon.

Mr A. M. Sullivan rose to a point of order, amid the greatest confusion, during which the Sergeant-at-Arms approached Mr Dillon, accompanied by five officers.

Mr Dillon—You are not going to use force, I hope.

The honourable member then rose, and, amid cries of "Shame," left the house.

And so the scene went on until the thirty-four were expelled.

Great meetings were subsequently held all over Ireland, in England, and the United States, at which the arrest of Mr Davitt was condemned as arbitrary and tyrannical; and on Thursday, April 21, the voice of all Ireland declared, through eleven hundred delegates, assembled at the National Land League Convention held in the Round Room of the Rotunda, Dublin, that there could be no peace in Ireland while Mr Davitt was a prisoner.

This great assembly of the Irish nation, comprising delegates from all sections of the country, including Catholics, Protestants, and Orangemen of all shades, was convened by the Irish National Land League, to express the opinion of the country on the Land Bill introduced by Gladstone into the House of Commons, and to decide whether the bill should be opposed by the Irish members or allowed to go to a second reading. It was decided, after a two days' debate, to let it go to a reading, the parliamentary party endeavouring to eliminate the objectionable clauses and introduce beneficial ones. The first act of the convention after organising, however, was to pass the following resolution:—

"Whereas, The recommittal to a British prison of Michael Davitt has been caused by his heroic defence, in a time of distress, of the landlord-persecuted tenant-farmers of Ireland, We,

the delegates of those tenant-farmers, in convention assembled, do hereby declare it to be the duty of the Government to restore him to freedom, and thus remove from the breasts of Irishmen the irritation which his continued incarceration will perpetuate and intensify."

Mr Thomas Brennan, in replying to the resolution, said:—

"It is an act of public duty upon our part to show our deep sympathy with the suffering, and our admiration of the brave soldier of liberty, the patriot of humanity, who inhabits a cell in Portland Prison to-day. It is well, too, I think, that from this convention there should go forth the declaration that there can be no peace in Ireland as long as Michael Davitt shall remain in prison; and no matter what may be the merit of the bill which we are now about to consider, or any other bill which we may be called upon hereafter to consider, there can be no message of peace as long as the man who was mainly instrumental in forcing such measures remains in the convict's cell."

Mr Brennan echoed the voice of Ireland—aye, and of America, too. THERE CAN BE NO PEACE WITH ENGLAND WHILE MICHAEL DAVITT REMAINS IN A CONVICT'S CELL.

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Michael Davitt was again released on the 6th of May, 1882, after having completed, altogether, nine years' imprisonment, less forty-seven days—exactly one-fourth of his life. The day of his discharge from Portland Prison being that upon which the Phoenix Park murders took place, he threw himself into the task of combating the false accusations of the London press that these assassinations could be attributed to the Land League organisation. In his letter to the *London Standard*, and reply to the pamphlet of Arnold Forster, he did much to calm down the angry feelings of Englishmen, and rebut the calumnies that were being circulated in the English papers as to the connection between agrarian crime and the Irish land movement.

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## CHAPTER XV.

## THE LAND LEAGUE PROPOSAL—ADDRESSES DELIVERED AT MANCHESTER AND LIVERPOOL.

On the 21st May, 1882, in the Free Trade Hall, Manchester, Mr Davitt delivered the following remarkable speech:—

The duties of a chairman upon occasions like this are ordinarily of a trivial character. To introduce the lecturer, preserve order, and submit to the penalty of a vote of thanks for not occupying too much of the attention of the audience, is generally the routine of a chairman's duty. I would, however, be underrating the importance of this vast meeting, and neglecting a duty which I owe to the interests of justice and to the cause of peace, if, in face of the present crisis, I should hesitate to inflict myself upon your attention for a longer period than is convenient to myself, or, perhaps, agreeable to you. To my friend, Mr George, I feel certain I need not apologise for trespassing upon his time and subject, and I am in hopes that my motives in dealing with the various intensified phases of the present situation will be appreciated by you to the extension of an indulgent hearing.

The change that has come over public opinion upon the subject of Land Reform, during my incarceration in Portland, is so vast in its import to the cause with which I am identified, that I am, I hope, pardonably anxious to justify the movement by the aid of which such a revolution in the popular mind of these countries has been effected. (Cheers.) Three years ago, when the cry of the "Land for the people" went up from a meeting in the west of Ireland, it was received with astonishment by our own countrymen, and branded at once as communistic and wicked in England. Yet an organisation for effecting the nationalisation of the land of this country is now numbered among its political forces, and has at its head such enlightened minds as Drs Russell, Wallace, and Clark. (Cheers.)

Peasant proprietary was ridiculed as ruinous and impossible by the late Lord Beaconsfield. (Hisses.) No, no; I must say I don't approve of that. (Cheers.) I never carry resentment into the tomb. (Cheers.) He was our enemy while alive, but we must be just to his memory—(cheers)—and when we show mankind that we have learned the lesson of knowing how to be just, we shall prove that we deserve to be free. (Cheers.) He propounded his famous theory that three profits must necessarily

be recognised in the agriculture of England, those of the landlord, the farmer, and the labourer; yet scarcely has his cloak of leadership fallen upon Lord Salisbury than the landlord's profit is recognised as an evil in the rural economy of Ireland, and peasant proprietary finds a lodgement in the legislative programme of the English House of Lords. Those who believed, with myself, that peasant proprietary, immensely preferable though it be to landlordism, would not meet to the full the final solution of the Irish social problem, were two short years ago put down as Utopian dreamers, yet one of the most respected bishops of Ireland has since proclaimed that "the land of every country is the common property of the people of that country—(cheers)—because its real Owner—the Creator who made it—has transferred it as a voluntary gift to them. *Terram autem dedit filiis hominum.* (The earth He hath given to the children of men.) Now, as every individual, in every country, is a creature and a child of God, and as all His creatures are equal in His sight, any settlement of the land of this or any other country that would exclude the humblest man in this or that country from his share of the common inheritance, would not only be an injustice and a wrong to that man, but would, moreover, be an impious resistance to the benevolent intentions of his Creator." (Loud cheers.)

All these vast strides, taken in conjunction with Mr Gladstone's legislation of the past and present year, ought to show, to every observing mind, that a movement from which such progress in economic thought has mainly sprung should not be lightly treated or hastily condemned because a storm of angry passions, inseparable from human struggles, has swept over an unfortunate country as a contemporary phenomenon. (Cheers.) If movements for the social and political amelioration of a people are to be held responsible for the crimes that are incidental, not to them, but to the wrongs which they strive to abolish, liberty itself would be a blood-stained monster, and the cause of societary progress be a criminal pursuit. No one laments the murders and outrages that have taken place in Ireland, recently, more than I do—(hear, hear)—and no one will be found more ready or earnest to prevent them in future; but to charge their perpetration upon the Land League movement, as most English papers are doing, is as blindly unjust as to bring home to the French Reformers of 1789 the atrocities of the Reign of Terror, and fasten upon the memory of Mirabeau the sanguinary appetite of a Marat. (Cheers.)

Knowing that if a fair hearing could be obtained in England



for a reformer it would be granted in Manchester—(cheers)—the birthplace of English reform, I have come to plead the cause of the Land League upon ground that is hallowed by the blood of Englishmen—(cheers)—spilled in the cause of justice and progress. (Cheers.) My object will be to show that to a tardy recognition of principles by English statesmanship, and an indifference towards, or hostility to, the just demands of the people of Ireland on the part of English popular feeling, are to be attributed the excesses that follow from justice long delayed, and crying evils allowed to pander to the dictates of unreasoning passion. Every one who is acquainted with the political career of John Bright—(some hisses)—and who has read the speeches of other English Liberal leaders, is familiar with the tone of scornful upbraiding with which, not they alone, but all the organs of the Liberal party, have assailed the Tories for their persistent opposition to all the great English reforms that have been carried from 1832 down to the Ballot Act of 1874. English Conservatism has been over and over again charged with initiating nothing for the national weal, and taunted with having obstructed all popular measures until success had placed them among the statutes of the realm. This hostility of the Tories towards the extension of popular privileges, as defined by their political rivals, is exactly similar to that of the people of England towards movements and measures in behalf of popular rights in Ireland. Neither English statesmen nor English public opinion ever trouble themselves to think of, propose, or initiate any legislative remedy for the wants and grievances that affect the well-being and contentment of the people of Ireland, but take up, as a general rule, towards such remedies as Irishmen propose and Irish public opinion endorses, the same antagonistic stand as that which is so loudly condemned when assumed by one English party towards the plans and proposals of the other. Thus every single Irish proposal for measures essential to our country's needs has to encounter two hostile Conservative forces ere it can hope for lodgement within the domain of practical politics—namely, the hereditary or aristocratic in Great Britain and Ireland, and the ignorant or prejudiced on the part of the popular mind of England. (Hear, hear.) Hence not a single remedial Act passed, or remnant of penal laws removed, from the passage of the Act of Union until the Arrears Bill, now before the House of Commons, but has had to be forced down the throat of English public opinion and Parliament by the intensity of Irish agitation. (Cheers.)

The parallel, however, between the hostility of English Toryism towards popular rights in this country and that of English popular feeling against the recognition of identical principles in Ireland, would only be complete if the Conservative party had had the power to have suspended the Habeas Corpus Act preparatory to the concession of some remedy for English discontent, and had likewise imprisoned such of the Liberal leaders as were chiefly instrumental in forcing such remedy upon reluctant legislation. (Laughter and cheers.)

The question I would like to ask of Englishmen, who are now compelled to study the problem of Ireland's pacification, is a simple and practical one. Is landlordism worth what its support is costing England—"no"—and the troubles and misery which it is entailing upon Ireland? ("No," and cheers.) No rational mind acquainted with the treasure of blood and money that has been wasted in defending it against the assaults of its victims would hesitate a single moment for a reply to this simple question. The only grounds upon which anything like a reasonable defence of this anti-Irish and irrational system can be based are that it is English, that it has always been deemed essential to the maintenance of England's power in Ireland, and that those whose interests would be affected by its abolition are the portion of the population of Ireland that is known to be the most loyal to the authority of England. Surely these reasons ought not to outweigh those which can be advanced by Irishmen, and which are supported by unprejudiced English thought upon the other side.

That the Irish land code is of English origin is true; but does this fact necessarily constitute it a good code, or one suited to the genius, customs, and wants of the Irish people? (Hear hear.) These land laws are notoriously unsuited to the requirements of a progressive age, and have consequently been, in a great measure, swept away in every civilised country outside of Great Britain and Ireland. But had not this been the case, and were they still capable of being pointed to as suiting the feelings and social condition of one or more civilised nations, this would be no argument for their continuance in Ireland in face of their career of disastrous failure in that country, and in opposition to the interests and will of the Irish people. (Loud cheers.)

The assertion that landlordism is essential to the supremacy of English authority in Ireland, that it constitutes "the garrison" by which the country is held in subjection, is one of those popular English fallacies which only needs to be examined in

order to be thoroughly exploded. Its origin is easily traceable to those who find security from the consequences of their treatment of the peasantry of Ireland in proportion to the extent of credit that it obtains in the English mind. If the landlords of Ireland were the only moral or physical power for the upholding of England's authority in that country, about how long could our people be kept in subjection to their rule? Not for a single day—(cheers)—and as it is well known that an army of 30,000 troops and a military police force of over 12,000 men are deemed necessary to defend the property of the landlords, it would be a waste of words to refute the assertion that Irish landlordism is the safeguard of England's supremacy in Ireland. (Cheers.)

Of all the institutions or laws bearing an English complexion in Ireland, and making a part of the machinery by which it is governed, landlordism presents the weakest points of attack, has always been, and must always continue to be, the most obnoxious factor of English rule, and would alone, in the absence of every other exasperating agency, keep the country in an unsettled state, fan the flame of social discontent, and inspire a national sentiment of disaffection towards the power that could sustain such a notoriously ruinous system. Instead of being England's stronghold, it is just the reverse, as it renders the name and authority of English government responsible for all the injuries which it inflicts upon the country, and necessarily involves in the infamy of its acts the name of that power whose instruments are essential to their perpetration. (Cheers.)

The next argument that is adduced to sanction the support given by Englishmen to Irish landlordism is calculated to appeal even more strongly to popular feeling in this country than that just mentioned, as it is made to represent a loyal section of the population of Ireland as occupying an isolated situation in the midst of a disloyal majority, and in need of a protection which would not be required but for such loyalty. This is one of the trump cards of the Irish landlords, and has always been played in a most effective manner by them. But is it a true or honest argument? It is quite true that they constitute what is known as the loyal section of the Irish people, because they hold the land that was formerly the property of the Irish nation. (Cheers.) They could not be otherwise than loyal and grateful towards the power that guarantees them in its possession, and places in their unscrupulous hands as well the entire government of the country and the administration of the law—(hear, hear)—but would their boasted loyalty stand the test of a Government con-

fiscation such as those by which the land was stolen from the people in the reigns of Elizabeth, James, and Cromwell? (Cries of "No.") They are loyal because it is their interest to be so—(cheers)—and they know as well as their persecuted tenantry could tell them, that the laws by which they have succeeded in reducing Ireland to beggary and chronic discontent are detested, not because those in whose interests they are maintained are loyal to England, but from the fact of their being the root of every social evil under which the country is groaning, and the chief source of the poverty and misery that burden the lives of our people. (Cheers.)

Let me ask fair-minded Englishmen whether the selfish loyalty of a class is a justification for upholding a system which constantly invites twenty times its number to be discontented? (Cries of "No.") Can a boasted attachment to English rule be construed into a privilege of pauperising an Irish nation? ("Never.") Let England by all means sustain what is just and wise to defend in the interests of her Irish ultra-loyalists, but let not Englishmen endeavour to perpetuate, by all the influence and power of the empire, an antiquated and obnoxious land code that stands forth to-day before the world with a record of centuries of failure unequalled by any institution that has ever fallen before the attacks of progress and enlightenment. (Cheers.) Such a policy is as unjust to the social well-being of the country as it is impolitic and ruinous to the popularity of English government, and should never be persisted in by a nation that claims to rule its dependencies in accordance with popular principles and in the spirit of constitutional law. A persistency in adhering to laws or institutions that are associated with certain phases of English conquest, but which time and the march of ideas prove not only to be no longer suited to societary wants, but a positive evil in a progressive age, has been the source of not a few calamities to the cause of the British empire, involving the prestige and name of England in more than one defeat and disgrace. If blind Conservative stubbornness will continue to disregard the consequences that have invariably followed from unbending opposition to the just and popular demands of a people, the continuance of Irish landlordism by English statesmen may prove a more costly blunder on this side of the Atlantic than did the imposition of unpopular taxes a century ago upon the then British colonies on the other side. (Prolonged cheers.)

Considered from a purely political point of view, Irish landlordism is, perhaps, a greater failure than in any other respect.

If its baneful influence upon the social economy of Ireland has been marked with general ruin to that country, its effects upon the attitude of the Irish people towards English law and supremacy—the support of which was contemplated as the chief end of landlordism when introduced into Ireland—have been scarcely less emphatic in their results. A system that is made to supplant another belonging to a subjugated people must possess two qualities that are essential to the permanency of all institutions substituted for those that are abrogated by a dominant power. It must equal or surpass in utility or popularity that with which the people upon whom it is imposed were familiar; or it must possess sufficient inherent force to command that respect or attachment which its shortcomings or unpopularity would fail to elicit. Wanting in the quality of intrinsic merit or favourable comparison with a superseded system in the estimation of those whose interests are at stake, the new code must necessarily be defective; deficient as well in the power to enforce its behests, it becomes a complete failure. Tried by these tests, how does Irish landlordism stand as a political institution? Instead of reconciling the people of Ireland to the loss of the national system which obtained among them for centuries previous to the English invasion, or winning them over to a willing acceptance of the new law, and to a submission to the power that upheld it, landlordism has had to sustain itself by every weapon of despotic power against an incessant agrarian war from its very inception in Ireland until the present hour. (Cheers.) Never has landlordism succeeded in obtaining a moral recognition from the Irish people. (Cries of "It never will," and cheers.) Not for a single day has the Irishman ceased to look upon the landlord as a social enemy, or the law by which he was compelled to part with most of his earnings in the shape of rent but as the detested instrument by which himself and family are impoverished and his country ruined. Illustration or evidence is unnecessary to sustain these assertions, as they are patent to all who have given the most cursory study to the Irish Land question, and stand uncontradicted by every English writer who has brought an impartial criticism to its investigation. As for the force by which Irish landlordism might retrieve its moral debasement in the opinions of our people, I have already shown, what is patent to all the world, that this politico-social system needs the constant guardianship of 12,000 military police and an army of over 30,000 soldiers to protect its very existence, and without the aid of which external

power, as has been truly remarked by an English writer, "the property of the landlords of Ireland would not be worth a month's purchase."

I have endeavoured, in the foregoing remarks, to place this question of the abolition of Irish landlordism before the English people, not from a purely Irish point of view or upon grounds of abstract justice, but in the light of a reform involving serious English interests—proving that such interests are endangered infinitely more by the upholding of Irish landlordism than they could possibly be by its abolition. It is for Englishmen to make up their minds what course to pursue in furtherance of their own political interest. The people of Ireland have fully made up theirs—(loud cheers)—as to what is their just demand, and what the sentence that must be passed upon Irish landlordism. (Renewed cheers.) Mr Gladstone's—(hisses and cheers)—I know there is a great deal, or rather it is considered by some that there is a great deal, in a hiss, but I for one never practise what I think is reprehensible—to hiss or attack a man not present to defend himself—"hear, hear," and cheers)—Mr Gladstone's—(renewed cheers)—temporary expedient of fixing rent, backed by the undisguised despotism with which he means to combat Irish Land reformers, may satisfy some and frighten other Irishmen from further efforts to effect a complete settlement of the Irish social problem; but he deceives himself egregiously—(hear, hear)—if he believes that the Land League movement is about to efface itself all the world over because he has been converted to Mr Parnell's views upon the Arrears question—(prolonged cheers)—and accepted the services of a Mr O'Shea in effecting the treaty of Kilmainham. (Laughter.) I think it well to just remind the jubilant Whigs who believe they have captured the whole Irish party through the diplomacy of a political go-between from Clare—(renewed laughter)—that the Land League movement was organised to effect the complete abolition of Irish landlordism—(cheers)—and that until that work is fully and completely accomplished there can be no alliance between the people of Ireland and the Whig party in this country. (Cheers.) Mr Gladstone wants Ireland to give a trial to his second attempt to settle the Irish Land question. The people of Ireland will refuse to give any further trial to Irish landlordism. (Cheers.) Instead of having grappled with this festering social cancer in a courageous and effective manner, which his previous failure to cure the evil would reasonably warrant, he has proceeded upon the lines of his

former mistake, and produced another experimental measure by which landlord and tenant, instead of being legally divorced, are both turned over into the hands of the lawyers, the country invited to place all its prospects of peace and prosperity in universal litigation, while the tenant-farmers are asked to see their interests protected, and their happiness insured, in the existence of a Land Court composed of lawyers and Irish land agents. The spider inviting the fly into his net—(laughter and cheers)—is only equalled in seductive disinterestedness by Mr Gladstone introducing the Irish tenant-farmers into a mixed gang of Irish “conservators of ancient barbarism,” and Irish agents, in order to be protected! (Laughter.) Even this much of legislation, small as it is, could not be given to Ireland without being spiced with the customary vindictiveness by which Irishmen are deprived of their liberty and their country flooded with troops, because the Whig party has been put to the inconvenience of attempting something for Ireland.

Those whose complete vindication from the charges of their enemies is established by an enactment in the direction of the remedy which they called upon the people of Ireland to demand, are, nevertheless, flung into prison to gratify the vengeance of the Irish landlords; yet Englishmen marvel why there is disrespect for law and order in Ireland. English statesmen and the instruments of alien rule in that country have never failed in showing our people a way in which to violate their own laws, and it appears supremely ridiculous to find fault with and punish our people for profiting by the example of their rulers. (Cheers.)

It has ever been, and is still, the fate of English Ministers never to know how to remedy any of our admitted wrongs by what are termed “instalments of justice” in a politic or conciliatory manner. Our people must be driven either to open attempts at rebellion, or Ireland be plunged into a ferment of political agitation, ere British statesmanship will admit that such wrongs, or the questions that embrace them, come within the domain of practical politics. But that is not all. Before these recognised grievances can be partially or wholly redressed, or a modicum of justice conceded, the Habeas Corpus Act must be suspended in order that Dublin Castle may be propitiated by an equivalent instalment of political vengeance. Thus the credit which could be gained from a not ungrateful people by a judicious treatment of the social and political wants of our country is lost to England through the vindictive spirit by which her concessions are accompanied to a sensitive and impulsive nation. The con-

cession upon the Arrears question is now offered side by side with a bill purporting to be aimed at secret societies and for the prevention of crime—(loud hisses)—but in reality intended to arrest the further public action of the people of Ireland towards the abolition of landlordism. Here, in the face of the most propitious hour that has presented itself to English statesmanship during the past eighty years for an effective settlement of the Irish difficulty, the fatal dual policy of the past is again resorted to, and outrage upon liberty, personal and political, is flung like a brand into Ireland, to excite again the angry passions which lead to lawlessness and crime. I am confident that if the healthy feeling of horror which was created throughout Ireland by the Phoenix Park tragedy was permitted to have its full effect upon the popular mind of the country, assassination would have been assassinated in Ireland by the melancholy event of the 6th of May. Now the country will see the use that Mr Gladstone is about to make of that event. (A voice: "No.") The Land League movement is to be crushed. (Cries of "Never," and cheers.) Every barrier that could stand between the people and landlord vengeance is to be removed in order that no political action in Ireland shall interfere with the subtle policy of the Whig Government in support of a doomed system. What will be the consequence? The people of Ireland can never place confidence in any English Government—(hear, hear)—that places the administration of its laws in the hands of Dublin Castle—(hear, hear)—that dépôt of centralised despotism—(loud cheers)—without a parallel in the history of constitutional government. Those in whom they have reposed confidence, to whom they look for guidance and support, are menaced with gagging laws, the very discussion of which, in the English House of Commons, has brought shame to the face of thousands of Englishmen.

What will be the consequence? The field of Irish political strife will be left clear to the landlords, armed with unlimited power by Mr Gladstone, and the equally unlimited power of secret combination, freed from the antagonism and rivalry of an open movement. To which of these two powers will the victims of Irish landlordism—those who know the implacable nature of landlord vengeance so well—secretly incline? I will answer this question in memorable words once uttered by John Bright: "When law refuses its duty, when Government denies the right of a people, when competition is so fierce for the little land which the monopolists grant to cultivation in Ireland, when, in fact, for a bare potato millions are scrambling, these people are driven



back from law and the usages of civilisation to that which is termed the law of nature, and if not the strongest, the law of the vindictive; and in this case the people of Ireland believe, to my certain knowledge, that it is only by these acts of vengeance, periodically committed, that they can hold in suspense the arm of the proprietor and the agent—(hear, hear)—who, in too many cases, if he dared, would exterminate them. At this moment there is a state of war in Ireland. Don't let us disguise it from ourselves. There is a war between landlord and tenant; a war as fierce, as relentless, as though it were carried on by force of arms. There is a suspicion, too, between landlord and tenant, which is not known between any class of people in this country, and there is a hatred, too, which, I believe, under the present and past system, has been pursued in Ireland, which can never be healed or eradicated." These expressions of John Bright's, years ago, face to face with a similar state of affairs in Ireland as that which confronts us now, I bring forward to show to Mr Gladstone and the English people what will be the consequences of this battle of vengeance that is going to commence between the landlords of Ireland and a great portion of the people of Ireland. In presence of this state of affairs in Ireland, vengeance is to be pitted against vengeance, the settlement of the agrarian war is to be left between the Clifford Lloyds—(loud hooting)—and the wild justice of revenge born of landlord oppression. I again ask, what will be the consequence? Had Mr Gladstone been in the confidence of the secret powers with which he pretends alone to grapple, he could not have more completely played into their hands. It is only when a people despair of justice at the hands of their rulers, and see their hereditary enemies unopposed by any protective movement, that occult agencies are looked upon with favour by such people, and that the sympathies of the injured are extended to those who avenge the wrongs that are inflicted in the name of law. There is no power at the disposal of Mr Gladstone, there is no method short of the extermination of the whole Irish race, that can grapple effectually with a secret movement when it is made to appear as the only protector of a wronged and trampled people—(loud cheers)—and which confronts the mandates of unlimited despotism with the weapon of retaliation.

If the Land League is to be prevented from succouring the evicted, if every channel of political effort not favourable to Whig legislation on the land question is to be closed up, then, indeed, will the whole situation be surrendered to the secret

movement, and *lex talionis* become the only refuge of despair. As the moral responsibility of the outrage epidemic of the past twelve months must, in my humble opinion, rest upon the Whig Administration for its coercive incitation to vengeance, so must the crimes that will follow additional coercion be placed at the same door. If Mr Gladstone is earnest in his efforts to put down crime, let him go to the source of all agrarian outrage, and remove Irish landlordism from Ireland. (Cheers.) If he be determined to put down secret societies, let him remove from the government of Ireland what makes English rule detested and English law distrusted—let him sweep away Dublin Castle—(loud cheers)—and show that he can repose the same confidence in Ireland that has not been abused in Canada. (Cheers.) If he believes that peace will be restored in Ireland while landlords have power to evict and the Castle power to trample upon every political opponent and every vestige of liberty, he has read the history of the Anglo-Irish difficulty to no purpose. As well might the doctor dream of restoring to health and vigour a patient in whose sensitive flesh the instrument that made the wound lies unremoved. I believe the admirable temper and manly self-control that has distinguished almost the whole of this country during the past fortnight, in face of what might have provoked an outburst of unjust and ungenerous wrath, together with the wide-spread anxiety that peace should be restored to Ireland and crime extinguished by generous and just legislation, would sanction measures of justice and conciliation which the past would not contemplate, and which the future, if embittered by angry passions and violence, may refuse to consider. Has Mr Gladstone the courage to respond to this feeling among the unprejudiced of his countrymen, and to make an heroic concession to justice and right; or will he continue, as in the new Coercion Bill, to be guided by the policy of a Forster—(loud hisses)—and the tactics of political adversaries? It would be vain for me to think that he would be guided in his actions by a man like myself. But humble and obscure though my origin and position may be—(prolonged cheers)—the son of an Irish peasant—(cheers)—who was refused shelter in an Irish workhouse by Irish landlordism; the son of an Irish mother who had to beg through the streets of England for bread for me—humble as that origin may be, the memory of that mother has made me swear that so long as I have tongue to speak, or head to plan, or hand to dare for Ireland—(cheers, during which a great part of the audience rose and applauded vociferously)—

Irish landlordism and English misgovernment in Ireland shall find in me a sleepless and incessant opponent. (Renewed cheers.)

It is useless to think that Mr Gladstone would be influenced by my advice, but had my voice been listened to when I last emerged from the prison into which his Government thrust me in 1870—(shame)—the sad history of the past two years would never have to be written, and the Ireland of to-day might have been otherwise than a standing reproach to English government. I tell him now, that, although the Arrears Bill may land his Government over a temporary difficulty, the very next season of scarcity or partial famine that unpropitious seasons will bring upon Ireland, will re-open the Irish Land question, and call into play the same passions and provoke the same strife between conflicting interests that have brought the Land League into existence and forced the hands of unwilling legislation. If he persists in dealing only with the Irish social problem, as intensified by the Land League agitation, instead of grappling with it as Irish Land reformers propose in connection with a train of retrospective ruin, present discontent, and the certainty of landlordism continuing to move in a circle of reproductive wrong, he will bequeath the settlement of the Irish Land war to the future, and leave the primary cause of Irish poverty, disaffection, crime, and misery to the country he is anxious should look to him as its friend.

Dark as is the present outlook for Ireland, I do not despair. (Hear, hear.) In a period of unexampled trial, the attitude of her people has been steadfast, courageous, and unbroken. The march of the social has dragged the settlement of the national question in its wake. If victory has not yet crowned the efforts of the Land League, we have called into existence the elements of proximate success. (Cheers.) From every prison in Ireland voices will go forth to teach the oft-repeated lesson that force is no remedy—(cheers)—against a cause which rests for support and sanction upon the ordinances of God and the dictates of justice and reason. Every parish in Ireland will have one or more in its midst that has suffered in the cause of liberty and fatherland; and from this outcrop of national sentiment, from men unjustly punished, women imprisoned—(shame)—and children indoctrinated in the creed of patriotism and social rights, will spring a generation before whose might no wrong can stand, and from whose birthland every vestige of social and political servitude must fall, as falls the withered leaves of autumn before the angry blasts of winter, (Cheers.)

Ere concluding what I fear has been a too lengthy speech—"No, no"—I feel compelled to make a few observations upon a subject which, of all others that are discussed in connection with the present state of Ireland, is the most painful to dwell upon. The outrages that have been committed during the past year in Ireland, culminating in the assassinations of the 6th of May, 1882, have placed the character of our country in a very odious light before public opinion throughout the world. The prejudice that has been thus excited against our cause will not permit of that calm and dispassionate inquiry which would trace to the primary source of all agrarian crime what our enemies have endeavoured to fasten upon a movement that has aimed at the removal of the one grand incentive to murder and revenge. It was in vain that over and over again it was pointed out that if the leaders of the people were deprived of liberty and evictions allowed to proceed, fierce passions would be evoked, and a spirit of evil unchained, throughout Ireland. The sanguinary record of the past twelve months is the sad fulfilment of these predictions. But who or what has suffered in consequence of such crimes? Apart from the obloquy which they are made to bring upon our country, they, and they alone, are responsible for the check that has been given to the Land League movement, and for the crisis with which we are now confronted. Granting all that can be said on the head of provocation—all that can be quoted to show that the balance of crime and outrage has ever been on the side of our oppressors in the past—when will we learn the lesson which common sense and prudence teach, that the one grand fatal error in all popular movements is to allow the promptings of individual passion to silence the warnings of moral sense and prudence in order to seek a selfish and criminal gratification, regardless of all consequences to a people's cause? (Hear, hear.) Are there not far nobler principles and more exalted and manly aspirations bequeathed to us from the past than those of hatred and revenge? If the powers on high seem indifferent to interfere in the defence of right, shall the cause of justice be sullied by unholy vengeance? If the one supreme danger that besets the path of this great movement be that of outrage, and the greatest obstacle in the way of success be the gratification of passionate resentment, why should not policy, prudence, morality, and religion stay the suicidal acts of those who retaliate for the wrongs inflicted upon injured men? If Irish landlordism finds its only support from public opinion in appearing to be the

victim of a people's implacable vengeance, why should its life be prolonged by the excesses of its victims? (Hear, hear.)

This may wear the appearance of preaching to the inherent weaknesses of human nature, a fruitless effort to stay those excesses of passion that are beyond the control of reason and religion, as their acts are unforeseen and above the power of any influence to arrest. But it is heart-rending to think that, were it not for the excesses of the past year, the cause of justice would by this time have triumphed, and Ireland would stand to-day in the position of a victor in her own cause and that of humanity also. (Cheers.) Had the promptings of revenge not frustrated the plans of the Land League, Irish landlordism could no more have withstood the forces that our plan of action had arrayed against it than could a rotten hulk, rigged with matchbox spars and tissue-paper sails, bear up against the fury of an equinoctial gale. (Cheers.) As for the other class of outrages that have stained the record of our country during the same period, no language is sufficiently strong with which to reprobate and condemn them. As in those above alluded to, comparison with similar classes of crime in this and other countries is of no avail to avert the stigma which their commission fixes upon our peasantry. As to the individuals who perpetrate these horrible brutalities, whether actuated by the incomprehensible motive that could prompt a tenant-farmer to perform them, or by the worst design that would incite the degraded instruments of Irish landlordism to their perpetration for the purpose of bringing odium upon the cause of Irish Land Reform, no difference of opinion can exist in Ireland or England as to the punishment which such crimes deserve. The wretch who is capable of such monstrous barbarity towards a dumb and inoffensive beast, places himself beyond the pale of human sympathy, and merits being branded with some indelible mark of popular execration, that should point him out for ever to his fellow-men as infamous and detestable.

And now, one word more before I conclude. Amidst all the troubles of the present movement, and in face of the opprobrium that has been heaped upon Ireland by its enemies in this country, there have not been wanting generous and justice-loving Englishmen who could brave the storm of popular prejudice in defence of the cause of the Land League and its leaders. (Cheers.) What Irishman's heart would refuse to beat with the warmest throbbings of gratitude at the name of honest Joe Cowen? (Loud cheers.) Or who among us could read the declaration of Mr Storey—(cheers)—in the House of Commons, on Friday night,

unmoved, when he asserted that if twenty English Radicals had seats in that Assembly, the Coercion Bill of last year would never have been passed into law? (Cheers.) When the representative of England's artisan class also declares that the voice of the country is against further coercion for Ireland, and in favour of justice to our people's cause, can we not see that other Broadhursts—(cheers)—are in the background, and that the tide of popular English feeling is turning in the direction of fearless and unprejudiced equity in the policy of ruling Ireland? (Cheers.) The stand taken during the excited temper of the past fortnight by the *Pull Mall Gazette*, and some few more English journals, to avert an outburst of unjust resentment against us in this country, is worthy of the highest praise for its enlightened and courageous advocacy of dispassionate justice replacing the hereditary policy of coercion for Ireland. Should we not endeavour to multiply such advocates here in England? It is easy of accomplishment. It needs no sacrifice of principle or national aspiration; it calls for nothing but what it is our moral duty to perform, our best policy to pursue. Let outrage cease in Ireland—(cheers)—let no suspicion of sympathy on your part here in England be made to arise at any act, great or small, that seeks justification from past events in the history of our country, and rely upon it that the number of the Cowens, Storeys, Broadhursts, Taylors, Laboucheres—(cheers)—Lawsons, Collings, and Thompsons, will multiply and lend to the cause of Ireland's social and political rights, the cause of justice and humanity, the manly advocacy of fearless English minds, and the unstinted sympathy of generous English hearts. (Prolonged cheering.)

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On the following Tuesday, Mr Davitt proceeded to Liverpool, where he again addressed a large audience on the same subject, as follows:—

That the discussion of the Irish question at so critical a stage as that to which it is now advanced is fraught with responsibility to whoever undertakes the task on behalf of the Land League, few will deny. When the Government is believed to be aiming at the prevention of all public discussion in Ireland, and the leaders of the National party are supposed to be at variance upon vital questions of principle and policy, the elements of precaution cannot be eliminated from the duty I am here to perform this evening. Nevertheless, I am of opinion that the time and occasion are opportune for an enunciation of what I believe to be the real objects of this move-

ment, and what I venture to say is asked for and required by the whole Irish race. (Cheers.) I venture to assert that the entire Irish question is not, as a rule, judiciously presented to public opinion by many who undertake to define its true character outside of Ireland; and it may also be said against us that we have hitherto been wanting in practical statemanship by insisting upon heroic remedies for Ireland's social and political wrongs, without pointing out, clearly and candidly, how those remedies could be applied. We have left an impression upon the public mind of this country that an ulterior object lies behind the social reform movement which we have initiated. Doubts are expressed by even friendly Englishmen as to whether the Land League is aiming at the abolition of landlordism or at something else. We are charged with raising the cry of "The Land for the people," and not defining its meaning; of demanding the expropriation of the Irish landlords, and falling shy of the question of compensation. My efforts this evening shall be directed to the removal of these doubts by presenting, as well as limited time and limited ability will permit, the Irish question in its entirety, as well as the solution which I believe the whole Irish race demand, and which wise and practical English statemanship can safely and with credit to itself undertake to concede. (Cheers.)

Ere endeavouring to do this, I think it of the first importance to give a bird's-eye-view of the situation in Ireland, in order that Englishmen may the better understand the motives which have actuated the Land Leaguers, and more calmly discuss the means whereby that situation can be changed with profit to Ireland and safety to British interests.

That the disturbed state of public order in Ireland during the past two years is not due to accident, few Englishmen will deny; that it is the logical outcome of short-sighted English statemanship most public men in this country are now beginning to admit. It will require very little reasoning to convince practical minded Englishmen that fires are not lit by spontaneous ignition, or great movements started without a basis of solid justification. What has been the general character of English rule in Ireland, looked at from an impartial point of view? That it has not been of a nature to win the people of Ireland to an abandonment of Irish institutions and aspirations, to the acceptance of those of their rulers, seven centuries of a struggle proclaim, and the present condition of our country confirms. (Hear, hear.) No power on earth claiming to assert its

authority over a people of another race can justify a rule whereby all the motives that have the greatest influence over that people's existence are stupidly ignored or wantonly trampled upon. (Cheers.) The motives which form the distinctive characteristics of the Irish people are, and always have been, enthusiastic devotion to their religious convictions, unflinching loyalty to the principle of nationality, and a passionate attachment to the soil of their fatherland. Is not the history of England's rule in Ireland a heart-breaking record of systematic oppression upon each and all of these inherent principles of Irish character? It is only within the present generation that a full concession of justice has been made to the first of the motives I have indicated, and that the Irish people have been accorded religious liberty. Was it an unjust concession? Has it been followed by consequences that can cause Englishmen to regret having made it? This, however, is finally settled, and Irish Catholics and Irish Protestants are now upon equal footings of religious freedom; and I am sure that neither Irishmen nor Englishmen will ever again pit one faith against another for political motives. The two remaining principles of Irish national character are at this moment contending against the very policy which denied Catholic emancipation until 1829, and withheld religious equality from the Irish people until our own days. Can these principles be stamped out? Will such policy succeed? These are questions which I am anxious to place before English public opinion at a time when, to borrow an expression of Mr Gladstone's, the English mind "is open" upon them.

Let us now see what are the grounds upon which these principles rest a claim for concessions of justice, and what are the forces arrayed behind them for their vindication. That Ireland has a just right to self-government no one can deny—(cheers)—that our people are unanimous in demanding it is apparent from Irish representative opinion and the admissions of the public press outside of Ireland. That self-government can be enjoyed by English dependencies, consistent with the integrity of the British Empire, an independent Irish Parliament ninety years ago, and Canadian and Australian Legislatures existing at the present hour, plainly demonstrate. (Hear.) That the Act of Union was an infamous transaction and has proved a complete failure, English modern history itself concedes. (Loud cheers.) That Dublin Castle rule—(groans)—is one of the primary factors in the present discontent of Ireland, and has ever been a source of the



keenest exasperation to our people, is now beginning to be made clear in this country. Upon these grounds, which no one can deny to be just ones, or can consistently refuse to discuss, we rest our claim for political autonomy. (Great cheering.) The grounds upon which we claim a settlement of the Land question are, if possible, more just, more urgent and imperious, than those advanced in behalf of the national question. That Irish landlordism has broken down—that it is discredited and repudiated by our people more thoroughly than any other system that has ever fallen before a nation's resolve and the march of progressive ideas—the present situation in Ireland declares in unmistakeable language. That it has been a ruin and a curse to our people no sane mind will gainsay. (Hear, hear.) Three millions of a population driven from a country in one generation—("Shame")—from a land capable of supporting more than twice its present population—the prevalence of wide-spread poverty among the unexterminated remainder—increasing disaffection among the masses, consequent upon ruinous exactions and the exercise of social tyranny by the landlords—a reign of terror and violence, giving birth to horrible crimes by calling forth heated and vindictive passions—all threatening a complete social disruption of the country, and all apparently, to the Irish people, sanctioned by English public opinion, and intensified by the blind and vindictive policy of one who had been a popular English statesman ere he left Bradford for Dublin Castle—(loud groans)—this is our justification for demanding the abolition of landlordism and the substitution of a national system in its place.

I shall now point out the forces that are arrayed behind these two principles of social and political reform, in order that the expediency of dealing justly and promptly with them—as formerly with that of religious equality—may be seen by practical English minds. That there is a new spirit abroad in Ireland—intelligent, resolute, and practical—has been borne testimony to everywhere. (Loud cheers.) That such a spirit might by despair or by desperate men be turned into complete subversive action, the history of the French Revolution declares. It was not dreamy speculations upon the origin of society which sent the frenzy of madness through a people's mind. It was the squalor of the ragged peasant in contrast with the luxury and effeminate splendour of the privileged class; the pallid faces and wasted forms of the peasantry who prowled hungry and fever-stricken through the land; the hopeless, helpless degradation of the mass of the French people; spurned and ignored by the

Government of the day. This was the bitter writing that was traced in characters of maddening portent which the multitude read with flaming eyes and sprang wildly to their feet to revenge and efface. (Cheers.)

That such a spirit should be driven to such deeds in Ireland, God forbid—but that such a spirit is abroad, and can be arrested by just and timely concession, I fearlessly proclaim here to-night. (Cheers.) The force that can guide that spirit to safe and moral action, that can shape its ends to beneficial work for Ireland, or that by letting it drift into headlong passion by simply abandoning it to itself would be then unable to restrain its excesses, should be one that ought to command the careful consideration of English public opinion. That force consists in the character of the men who are now the leaders of the Irish people. From Mr Parnell—(loud cheers)—downwards, they are nearly all young men, with full twenty years of political life before them. If they have succeeded in doing so much during the past three years, what are they capable of accomplishing in the next twenty. (Loud cheers.) They have given proof of ability, courage, self-devotion, and energy, both outside and inside of Parliament, unparalleled in any previous agitation or reform movement. They stand pledged to the Irish people to work out the social and political regeneration of their country, and I know them too well to believe that calumny, coercion, or imprisonment will ever make them abandon—(cheers)—what every rational mind must admit to be a just, a moral, and a winning cause. (Loud cheers.)

This is something like an outline of the general situation upon the Anglo-Irish difficulty at present; but there is a more particular or immediate aspect of it, which I will endeavour to bring before Englishmen. Upon what is the English Parliament now engaged? Ireland, almost exclusively—to the almost total neglect of the general business of the empire. The Arrears Bill, while being good in its way, and calculated to arrest crime and outrage to some extent, is a most convincing argument that the Land Act is a failure, and leaves the agrarian war almost where it has hitherto been. In no part of Ireland is the Land Act considered so much of a failure as in Ulster, where leaseholders and every other class of tenants are burdened with rents that were fixed when prices were high and competition from outside unthought of. In my travels through the West and North, recently, I found everywhere a want of confidence in the Land Courts, and heard from all classes that the landlords, as in every other branch of Irish administration, had

succeeded in turning these courts to their own purposes in all but a few instances. (Hear, hear, and hisses.) While travelling in the west of Galway I found a state of affairs that have recently been brought before the public by an English correspondent. Evictions are taking place in hundreds, when, on the admission of the authorities that carry them out, the household belongings of 130 families were not worth a single pound altogether. I found that a rent of from 15s to £1 per acre is demanded for patches of a stony mountain side, from which it is impossible to extract sufficient food for a year for those who till them. These rents and accumulated arrears are now demanded, when almost every source from which they were paid in the past have ceased to supply them—kelp burning, fisheries, turf-selling, and remittances from friends in America and England. The soil of Carrroe can no more produce rent than can oranges be made to grow upon the Liverpool race-course—(laughter)—yet, in defiance of all theories upon rent for land, people are evicted for the non-payment of unjust and impossible rent.

But my object is not to dwell upon scenes of misery to-night. I am anxious to point out how misery, discontent, and crime can be banished from Ireland entirely; and I will, therefore, proceed with my bird's-eye-view of the present situation. There is but one more feature in that situation which I wish to dwell upon before discussing the remedy for the Anglo-Irish difficulty, and it is this:—Mr Gladstone, speaking in the House of Commons the other night, proudly termed that assembly “The Temple of Liberty.” From an English point of view, this may or may not be a true name for England's Parliament; but from an Irish point of view, there can be no difference of opinion on that point at the present hour. (Applause.) This “Temple of Liberty” is asked by the greatest of living statesmen to strike at every single principle that constitutes liberty in any land or among any people. (Hear, hear.) Trial by jury is called the palladium of liberty in every constitutionally governed country as well as in England; yet Mr Gladstone is about to abolish trial by jury in Ireland for three years. (Groans.) The right of public meeting is one of the most cherished privileges of a free people; yet Mr Gladstone is about to make public meeting in Ireland dependent upon the will of a single English functionary. The liberty of the press is prized by every civilised nation as the greatest safeguard of its liberty; yet Mr Gladstone is resolved upon gagging the Irish press. (Groans.) The inviolability of

domestic privacy is one of the proudest boasts of Englishmen; yet Mr Gladstone is about to empower an Irish policeman to intrude upon any Irishman's home at any hour of the night he may please to consider it the object of suspicion. (Cries of "Shame.") Verily, this "Temple of Liberty" is at present occupied with anything but a creditable or congenial task.

Having now defined the real nature of the situation, and looking upon the present lull in the Land League movement as a temporary cessation of hostilities during which a parley can be made, I will endeavour to point out the way in which unprejudiced minds on both sides of the Irish Sea can discuss the terms of peace, and end the agrarian war in Ireland for ever. I am about to undertake the task that should have been performed long ago—that is, the definition of "The Land for the people," the charter cry of the Land League, and the bug-bear of the landlords and Conservative organs. (Cheers.) In doing this, I will lay myself open to the suspicion of differing from Mr Parnell and most of my colleagues in the Land League movement; but the fact is, there is not a particle more of difference of opinion between the member for Cork and myself upon this question than there was when we first stood together upon a public platform in Westport three years ago. (Loud and prolonged cheering.) Mr Parnell advocates peasant proprietary; I am in favour of the land becoming the national property of Ireland. If peasant proprietary is conceded either by Lord Salisbury, when he gets into power, or by Mr Gladstone ere he gets out—(hisses)—I am perfectly satisfied that the purchase-money that must be advanced by the State for carrying out such a scheme will become the title-deed of the State to the land of Ireland, and that the nationalisation of the land will be the consequence. Believing this to be inevitable from the growing poverty of Irish agriculture, I am almost indifferent as to whether Mr Parnell's plan or my own be adopted; but as I was the first to raise the cry of "The Land for the people," I think the time has now come for giving a clear definition of what I mean and propose. (Applause.)

The following statistics will be given only as an approximation to the actual figures, because I have been compelled to borrow them from my "Jail Journal," and I have not had time, since my release from prison, to compare them with later official returns:—Putting the average annual value of all the cereal produce of Ireland at £30,000,000, and annual produce of live stock wealth at say half the total return for any given year, we

will have about an equal sum of £30,000,000. This will give, say, £60,000,000 as the total annual produce of the land of Ireland. Assuming the present annual rental of the land to be £15,000,000, we have thus one-fourth of the gross produce, or 25 per cent. of the annual wealth of the country seized upon by the Irish landlords. Twenty pounds out of every one hundred that is earned by the labour and enterprise of our entire agricultural class is claimed by a small number of persons who contribute nothing whatever to its production, and who cap the climax of this annual confiscation by taking most of this money out of the country which produced it, and spend it to the benefit of other lands and peoples than ours. (Hisses.) I maintain that rent for land that is cultivated by labour alone—or by the joint agencies of capital and labour—independent of landlord assistance, risk, or superintendence, is an unjust and indefensible tax upon a country's industry, that can be more truly described as legal theft than by the conventional terms that designate it a tribute legally due to the prescriptive rights of an unjustly privileged class. If the land became national property—landlordism being abolished, and full State protection and encouragement given to the produce of industry and capital—it would be no exaggerated estimate to put down the yearly value of cereal wealth at double the present amount—that is, £60,000,000. Adding to this the former estimate of yearly live stock wealth, we would have a total of £90,000,000 annually from the land of Ireland. Allowing 10 per cent. off this for diminution of prices, consequent upon increased production, we would still have £20,000,000 more wealth from the soil every year than we have now under the existing state of things. (Hear, hear.) Instead of charging this yearly cereal and live stock wealth with a 20 per cent. rent to the landlords, it would only be taxed, under the national land system, in proportion to the amount of money required for the civil government of the country—administration of law, police, education, hospitals, poor-rate, water-rates, or the various public purposes for which special taxes are now levied upon the country, and duties placed upon the food and comforts of the people.

To see what such a tax would amount to ordinarily, and thereby determine the difference between the rent now paid to the landlord and the land tax that would then have to be paid to the State, it will be necessary to make an estimate of the probable annual public expenditure of Ireland. We will put down the cost of civil administration, including payment of

police at £4,000,000; education, £1,500,000; poor-rate, £1,000,000; total local rates, £2,000,000; borough and water-rates, £1,000,000—giving in all a total of £9,500,000 annual outlay in carrying on the national business of the country. In order to meet this yearly public charge without levying a penny of it upon the non-agricultural classes—that is, exempting all classes from both the direct and indirect taxation that is now imposed for Imperial and local government purposes—we should only have to abolish landlordism and rent for land, and place such a tax upon all land values as would meet the public expenditure, as just specified. (Hear, hear.) Ten per cent. on the gross annual agricultural produce of Ireland—or half what is now paid to the landlords in rent and loss to the country—would, under the national land system, carry on the civil government of Ireland, save the tenant-farmer half of what he now pays in rent, remove all the taxes that now fall upon the mercantile, commercial, professional, and industrial classes, and take off those duties from the commodities of daily life that burden the lives of the artisan and labouring classes, and deprive the masses of healthy and sufficient food. (Applause.) The State would simply be the steward of the national property. For the use of that property, and the protection that would be given to the farmers and labourers who worked it from the confiscation of their interest in the same, a tax of say 10 per cent. upon the estimated annual produce would be levied. This tax, instead of going into the pockets of an idle class, and being lost to the country, would be expended in the interests of the country, and would augment the national prosperity. The farmer would have absolute security of tenure from the State, subject to the payment of this nominal tax, while the property which his capital and industry would create in the land which he cultivated would be his, to dispose of when he pleased, as tenant-right is now sold or disposed of when farmers so desire. Such tenant-right or property created in the soil by improvements not to be interfered with or taken by the State without a full equivalent compensation being given in return by the same; agricultural labourers to be secured the occupancy of such plots of land by the State as would be sufficient to supply themselves with the independency and comforts that are claimed for them under the peasant proprietary plan; the professional and trading classes would be exempt from direct taxes; the great industrial and labouring classes would be freed from all the tribute that is now levied upon their earnings in the shape of borough and county rates;

while those duties, which place nearly all the comforts and luxuries of life beyond the reach of the poorer industrial orders, could be entirely removed to the direct gain of the whole community. (Hear, hear.) Thus, the non-agricultural classes would receive a dividend out of the annual produce of the land, equivalent to what they now pay out of their earnings for the carrying on of the general and local government of the country, the education of the people, and the support of the destitute and infirm; while the farmers would possess all the security that a peasant proprietary could offer without having to provide the purchase-money which such a scheme would require them to pay for the fee simple of the land. They, like the rest of the community, would also be free from the taxes, rates, and duties upon articles of consumption that now fall upon the public generally. (Cheers.) This is what I mean by "The Land for the people." (Loud applause.)

The questions that will at once be addressed to the proposer of such a scheme of social reform will be—1st, Upon what grounds can the land be resumed as the property of the State? 2nd. Would such a land system be the best for society and the interests of good government? 3rd. Is it feasible? and what compensation, if any, are the landlords to receive for the expropriation of the property which they claim to have in the soil? I will endeavour to answer those objections in the order in which I have put them. To make the land of Ireland, or of any country, national property, would simply be the resumption of that State ownership of the soil which obtained amongst all nations anterior to the system of land monopoly which class government has established for the aggrandisement of a privileged section in society. This system of land monopoly having failed completely as a land code, as is evidenced in social discontent, prevalence of poverty, and non-fulfilment of the obligations upon the performance of which it could alone rest a claim for existence, it becomes both the duty and the right of the State to call upon "the unjust steward to give an account of his stewardship, for he can now be steward no longer." (Loud and prolonged cheering.) To permit a class to hold the land of a country as its absolute property involves the giving of an influence over the lives, happiness, and industry of the people of that country inconsistent with the freedom and welfare of mankind, the maintaining of which should be the primary object of every people. The right of all men to participate in the benefits of the soil by the State ownership thereof can be claimed

from the fact that land is a natural agent, and that the value of land arises from, and is maintained by, the aggregation of population and the exercise of industry by a people. (Cheers.) The value thus imparted belongs to the people, and not to an individual or a class. That a national land system would be the best for society and good government is self-evident. (Hear, hear.) By ensuring a more equal distribution of wealth, increasing the productiveness of the soil through the breaking up of large estates, and giving a stimulus to agricultural industry, poverty would be diminished, and crime deprived of most of the incentives to its commission; while government would have on its side the Conservatism that would not fail to result from the removal of all grounds for agrarian crime and social discontent through a just and final settlement of a burning question. (Applause.)

The feasibility of such a settlement will be best evidenced by grappling at once with the chief difficulty in the way of any scheme of Land Reform that aims at the abolition of landlordism. (Hear, hear.) I will endeavour to show how this difficulty can be successfully met. The question of compensation is practically the only one now left to discuss in connection with the fate of Irish landlordism. I start with the proposition that, in accordance with strict justice, the landlords of Ireland are not entitled to their fares from Kingstown to Holyhead—(loud and prolonged applause)—for the loss of their criminally abused proprietary rights; but, as conventional justice or the claims of prescriptive right cannot possibly be repudiated by the English Government, or avoided by Ireland, if a peaceful settlement of the land war is to be arrived at, we must face the question of compensation. (Hear, hear.) Well, according to even conventional or political justice, those who, by their enterprise and labour, have given the present value to the land of Ireland, are surely entitled to their share of its market price—(hear, hear)—in other words, the farmer's property in the soil which he alone has improved by his industry and capital, must be equal in value to that claimed by the landlord in virtue of either purchase or prescriptive right. Leaving this property to the farmer, we will only have to deal with the landlord's share. To determine this, it would be necessary to arrive at an estimate of the intrinsic worth of the land anterior to the increment of its value by the present generation. In the time of Dean Swift, the annual rental of Ireland was but £2,000,000. To-day it is about £15,000,000. Will any one, conversant with the history of Irish landlordism since that date,



hesitate to say whether this increased value is due to the landlords or to the people of Ireland. Taking the farmer's and the landlord's interest to be equal, the latter's share of the market price of the land of Ireland now would be twenty years' purchase of half the present annual rental, or £140,000,000. This sum I would propose to raise by either public loan or the issue of Government bonds bearing 3 per cent. interest, principal and interest to be chargeable to Ireland's contribution to the Imperial revenue. Thus: Annual revenue of Ireland, say £7,000,000; interest on £140,000,000 at 3 per cent. per annum, £4,200,000; leaving annual balance of £2,800,000 for sinking fund with which to pay off the principal. This it will do in a period of about fifty years—the land tax of, say, 10 per cent. upon all land values supplying the expenditure of civil administration now met by such revenue. By this plan of settlement, Ireland itself would get rid of landlordism without touching the pockets of the English tax-payer; a compensation would be given to the landlords to which, in strict justice, they are not entitled—(hear, hear)—all incentives to social discontent would be removed; agrarian outrage would of necessity disappear from the absence of landlord tyranny and conflicting agrarian interests; while the whole country would not fail to commence a new life of peace, contentment, and prosperity. (Loud cheers.)

To this plan of settlement, even if granted to be feasible, there will be two objections made, representing both extremes of the Anglo-Irish difficulty. The English Government may say that the people of Ireland would refuse to pay a land tax for the support of alien rule—that similar difficulties would arise in the collection of such a tax as are now encountered in the exaction of rent. I will dispose of these objections before discussing the more serious one that will be offered from the other extreme. There could be no more difficulty in collecting such a tax than has to be met in collecting the ordinary direct revenue of the country at present. The fact that a land tax that would probably never exceed half the amount that is now paid in rent was to be expended for the good of the country, and would constitute the farmer's title to security in his holding, would make such an annual tribute a willing contribution. His property in the soil would also be a reliable security against repudiation of fiscal obligation.

The other objection is a more serious one than that just answered, as it will stand upon the strong ground of Irish national sentiment, and appeal to the fears which jealously guard

the highest aspirations of our race. To propose that the English Government should become the owner, steward, or guardian of the soil of Ireland, will, at first sight, appear an anti-national settlement of the land question, and one which involves a principle of renunciation that cannot be sanctioned by Irishmen who belong to the Extreme or Nationalist party. I am convinced, however, that a calm consideration of the question will dissipate the idea that the nationalisation of the land of Ireland is any more of a recognition of England's right to rule us than is involved in the payment of taxes or in calling upon its Government to advance the necessary funds for the carrying out of a scheme of peasant proprietary. (Applause.) While I yield to no Irishman alive in my allegiance to the principle of Ireland's right to govern itself—(applause)—I would infinitely prefer to deal directly with an English Government than with its exacting and unscrupulous mercenaries—the Irish landlords. (Hear, hear, and applause.) Better to have the land of our country administered by even Executive English authority, than see it made the instrument of social slavery and degradation—of tyranny and exaction—by the merciless and polluted hands of Irish landlordism. (Loud cheers.)

There is, of course, the probability that such a land code would appeal to the Conservative instincts of an agricultural people, and cause them to look with favour upon and pay with allegiance the power that would secure them in the enjoyment of social peace and prosperity. This result may be reasonably expected from any settlement of the land question whatever that may be won from the Government of England, as the great majority of mankind are rationally actuated by that excusable selfishness which impels them, as in the ordinary affairs of business life, to seek the best bargain from society in the matter of human comfort and security. (Hear, hear.) When contending forces are aiming for the approval and support of the people who are to be benefited by the outcome of the contest, it is only natural to expect that whoever gives to or secures most for the people will gain most in their regard. Admitting, what no one can deny, that England must be a factor in any settlement of the land question that takes place, so long as England's authority is dominant in Ireland, the selection of land systems must be determined by their relative merits as such, and their respective adaptability to the genius and requirements of our people. I contend, therefore, that the nationalisation of the land under the existing political relationship of the two countries would be no

more of an abandonment of national right or national honour than is involved in any transaction of the every-day political life of our country; while I claim for such a settlement more solid social advantages, both for agricultural and non-agricultural classes alike, than can be obtained under an improvement of the existing system, or by the substitution of a peasant proprietary. (Loud cheers.)

But my proposal or plan of pacification does not rest here; the social difficulty is not the only factor in the Anglo-Irish question. An older difficulty, and equally disturbing element in the politico-social life of our country, is its present system of government. That Dublin Castle rule—(hisses)—is as monstrous a failure as Irish Landlordism, is a proposition which few will be found courageous enough to deny. (Cheers.) It is simply a systematised rule of national exasperation; a mode of administration as little understood by the English people, and as unrepresentative of constitutional government, as if the ill-omened edifice that stands upon Cork Hill were situated on the banks of Yangtse-Kiang, instead of being within a few hours' sail of Liverpool. (Loud cheers.) It is at last becoming as evident to enlightened English opinion that Ireland must be granted some form of self-government as that Irish landlordism is repudiated by our people, and has proved a complete and disastrous failure. It is no extravagant proposition, therefore, to couple the settlement of the national with that of the land question, and to insist that rational demands upon both must be considered by English public opinion. The present is the most opportune time that has presented itself for the solution of the Anglo-Irish difficulty since the passage of the Act of Union, and the only effectual remedy, in my opinion, is self-government for Ireland and the nationalisation of the land under the administration of an Irish Parliament. (Loud cheers.)

That this will be considered an extreme programme by most of the English press I am prepared to admit; but I am confident that, if Englishmen will approach the discussion of it with calm and unprejudiced minds, it will be found to contain the basis upon which Ireland's peace and happiness may be built with safety and credit to the enlightened statesmanship that may have courage and foresight enough to offer timely justice to a people who are no longer a power to be despised or a nation willing to submit to continued insult and injustice. (Loud and prolonged cheers.) I would ask Englishmen to remember that there is not a single newspaper in England, or scarcely a public man

representing English public feeling, that does not now admit that England's rule of Ireland has been unjust, illogical, and indefensible in the past. (Cheers.) What has convinced them of this? Movements like that which the Government is now desirous of suppressing—men who are now undergoing the same punishment and encountering the same calumny and abuse that were heaped upon Irish public men connected with former agitations. Time will again vindicate the course I am advocating here to-night, and show that the Land League leaders, who are now stigmatised in every possible language of abuse and misrepresentation, are advocating the true remedy for admitted wrongs, and pointing out the means by which that remedy can be applied, and which, if rejected, as other remedies have been rejected in the past, an English generation will yet live to mourn and deplore. (Loud cheering.)

I have now defined what I mean by "The Land for the people." I have endeavoured to point out how that can be accomplished without drawing upon the pockets of Englishmen, and with a certainty of ending the agrarian war in Ireland. (Hear, hear.) I have promulgated my full programme, and I have only to say that from this night forth, so long as I have life to devote to the cause of Ireland, that life shall be devoted to furthering this programme in the interests of my countrymen. (Applause.) I have only to ask from the Irishmen and Irish ladies of Liverpool that sympathetic assistance and consideration which has already been extended to that movement which I had a hand in initiating. (Applause.) I cannot conclude my speech here this evening without tendering, as an Irishman and Land Leaguer, my thanks to the Irish ladies of Liverpool for their magnificent assistance to the people of Ireland during the recent crisis; and I cannot, at the same time, sit down without giving expression to my pride of living in an age when the women of Ireland, not only in Ireland, but in England and America, have been aroused to show that patriotism and courage which once characterised our countrywomen on the walls of Limerick. (Loud and prolonged cheering; the entire audience rising and waving their hats and handkerchiefs.)

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## CHAPTER XVI.

MR DAVITT ON LIBERTY—THE CONTRASTS BETWEEN AMERICAN FREEDOM AND IRISH DEGRADATION DURING THE PAST CENTURY VIVIDLY PORTRAYED.

AFTER delivering the preceding speeches in Manchester and Liverpool—the latter of which has excited so much comment and controversy on both sides of the Atlantic—Mr Davitt made a tour through Connemara and the west of Ireland, to inquire into the condition of the people. He then proceeded to America, in response to an invitation from the combined Irish Societies of Massachusetts, to be present at a great demonstration that was to take place in Boston, on the 17th of June, for the benefit of the Land League. Though only remaining in America for the short space of a month, he addressed immense audiences in New York, Boston, Albany, Jersey City, New-Haven, Hartford, Philadelphia, Chicago, Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, Providence, Worcester, and Troy, as well as several smaller meetings in New York, immediately before returning to Ireland. The following speech, delivered in Troy, New York, on the 4th of July, has been much admired in America:—

The feelings of an Irishman standing below the flag on which the eternal stars of freedom are blazoned, and speaking to American citizens on the anniversary of the birth of their great republic, are somewhat strange. Conscious as he must be that he is addressing those who enjoy that liberty, social and political, for which his own countrymen, in his own land, long so intently, is it wonderful that a slight feeling, akin to envy, should tinge his thoughts? As I stand here to-day, and think of the difference between you who listen and me who speak, my voice is well-nigh hushed—you who represent a race as free as is God's wind; I who represent a race chained and bound. You who know no law save that which in your wisdom you elect to obey; I who know that my people are governed by laws passed by a hostile power. Your people have free speech, a free press, a free ballot, free homesteads, free schools; my people have none of these things. Is it any wonder then that I, as I stand here speaking to you, should be conscious of a feeling of sadness at the contrast between your lot and that of my people at home? (Applause.) But more than all the personal benefits which you enjoy in this country, your fathers won for you a higher and holier privilege. To you is given the right of sanctuary for the oppressed.

America's broad arms are always open for the distressed of every tongue and every clime. This right, this high and holy duty, was given to you with your freedom, and nobly have you performed it. (Applause.) To no people—because, perhaps, none have suffered more—has this protection been extended more freely and more generously than to the unfortunate of my race. The feelings of Irishmen towards America I shall not attempt to describe in words. Deeds must be answered by deeds; and in the blood of my countrymen which has stained the shot-ploughed battle-fields of your republic with a brighter crimson than that which bars the white field of your flag, is written the record of Ireland's gratitude—(applause and cheers)—not alone for protection and sanctuary. When the cruel famine has come, and the people have been dying like rotten sheep upon the hill-side, Ireland has stretched out her hands to America, and from this side of the broad Atlantic have come the ships laden with food. The fainting man has blessed the givers and the gift; the weak mother, as she has watched her children eat, has lifted her cheek, stained with the trickling tears of gratitude, to God, and breathed a prayer which has been registered on high in letters of golden light. (Applause.) From thousands of mud cabins, abodes of misery and want, have come the tears and blessings and love and prayers of a thankful people, in a great wave of gratitude which has run high upon your shores. (Applause.) To thousands of Irish men and women have the gifts of America carried with them something more precious than the gifts themselves—the feeling that there was sympathy for them among their kind. Misery, oppression, starvation, had well-nigh brought about a belief in the minds of my race that they were alone on green earth with none to care whether they lived or died. To these despairing minds the gifts of America have come, and have brought healing in their wings of love. (Applause.) The mountains of Cork looked less stern, the Lakes of Killarney laughed more brightly in the sunlight when it was said the corn ships of America had come, bringing their treasures of food and their wealth of sympathy. (Loud applause.) Am I wrong in saying that while blessing others, America has herself been blessed? It is a law of human nature that the gift which is prompted by love shall carry a double good to him who gives as to him who receives. Learned men, who have studied deeply into the secrets of nature, tell us that force, like matter, is never lost. Is it nothing that every wind which sweeps across the waste of waters from the Old World to the New comes laden with the gratitude of a race?

(Applause.) Is it nothing that every mother in Ireland, while speaking with bated breath of the misery of the hunger years to the prattling babe at her knee, couples with the hideous story a blessing on America? Is it nothing that an oppressed people look to you for help and succour with the confidence of a child, sure that no appeal will remain unanswered, no plaint of suffering be allowed to pass unheeded? To me it seems that the position of America is a great, a godlike position; that of all the glories which have clustered around her name, like the stars upon her flag, none can equal this. (Cheers.) As an Irishman, then, I am here to speak to you to-day. Two thronging trains of thought crowd into my brain—the one, the memories of what America has been to Ireland; the other, what America represents to herself and to the nations of the earth. The one contains the darkness of misery, relieved by the sunshine of love; the other is that effulgent light of freedom and liberty which almost dazzles the eyes of those who gaze. Of the one I must perforce be silent, because words are, after all, but poor and weak when the heart is filled to overflowing with feelings. Of the other, I would that my tongue were touched with the fire of eloquence that I might paint for you a picture of your liberty. (Applause.) But your freedom and your generosity have placed you in a position towards Ireland which is unique in history. Without a voice in her legislation, without the power to elect the lowest of her officials, America governs Ireland; American public opinion rules a race three thousand miles away. This is a small part of the reward which America has won for herself, but think for a moment what a grand reward it is. (Applause.) Think for a moment of what this means. The light of liberty in America stimulates my people to struggle for liberty at home. This would happen in any event. But the use to which you have put your liberty, your relief and aid for the distressed, have made my people give to you the right to tell them what they shall do. In the long record of crimes which we call history, there are many entries of races conquered by the sword, and held by the same power. Invasion, bringing in its train the horrors of carnage and of death; the sorrows of weeping widows and orphans; silent tears of strong men who have fought until they can fight no longer; the lurid glare of burning homesteads, the suffering, the misery and the pain; invasion has before now resulted in a people prostrate before the conquerors. You have invaded Ireland, but there have been no tears save those of gratitude, no cries but those of blessing, no feelings save those

of love. (Applause.) Without a gun or sword, without a soldier or cannon, your race has conquered mine. Your weapons were love and sympathy, and your empire is seated in the hearts of my people, never to be overthrown so long as the stars upon your flag shall shine with the glorious light of human liberty and human right. To me this is a wonderful thing—more wonderful than I can tell you. A people conquered, a race enslaved by love! Think of it for a moment, and tell me if America has not, in blessing others, herself been blessed. What record of bloody fields of conquest can compare with such a victory as this? Weighed in the balance—the sorrow in one scale, the happiness in the other, the blessings in one, the curses in the other, the love in one, the hate in the other—which scale will kick the beam before the judging eyes of coming generations? (Applause.) But with such a conquest comes a duty. Power always carries with it responsibilities. You cannot train a people to trust in you and then desert them. Having taken them to your heart, you must listen to their cries. And to-day my people are crying to yours; not for relief in money. That is, thank God, not needed. I hope, I believe, that gaunt famine has fastened her fleshless fingers for the last time upon the Irish race. (Applause.) If it were for money, I know beforehand what the answer would be. America has too often stretched out the hand of protection to Ireland for an Irishman to doubt her now. But my people are crying to yours for judgment between them and England. To you they appeal to say whether it is right that Ireland should be enslaved and held in bondage against her will; to you, as to a race of men who have grown strong and wise in the light of liberty, she appeals to know if it is not her right to be free. To your judgment she appeals without fear, because she knows that a race of free men will not, cannot, say another shall be slaves! (Cheers.) So I, an Irishman, stand upon this platform this day, this fourth of July, this anniversary of the day when your fathers declared freedom to be an inalienable right of all men, and appeal to you to listen to the cries of my people. You sit in judgment. Not alone do the Irish cry to you for help. The only thing dreaded by England in the struggle she is now waging is American public opinion. (Applause.) I have heard it said that Irishmen in America remain Irish while other races become American; that the German, the French, the Spanish, the English when they come to this country at once become citizens of the United States and cast in their lot with the country of



their adoption, looking not at that which has gone before. There is a radical difference in the causes which have led to the emigration of the Irish and of other races. The German has made up his mind to come to America after long thought; he has heard from his friends here of the chances there are for men in this land, and calmly and deliberately he determines to leave the fatherland and seek a new home. The act is purely one of deliberation and free will. As the German, so the other emigrants who come to you from afar. With them, as a rule, emigration has been and is the result of a belief that their condition will be bettered, their circumstances be improved by the change; it is a deliberate act, brought about by the same kind of circumstances which lead to the performance of any piece of business, a belief that the change will lead to a better condition of affairs for the person making it. The voluntary nature of this must be kept clearly before your minds if you would understand the difference between this emigration and that of the Irish. It has been said, and with great truth, that there is implanted in the Celt a great love of country. (Applause.) I cannot, in the face of the acts which this day so vividly brings before your minds, and would not say that the Irishman's love for his native soil is greater than that of any other man, but I can at least say with truth it is as great. Love of country is common to all men. It is the crystallisation in us of the sentiments and feelings which attach themselves to the localities we associate with our kindred and our friends. With most men love of country is associated with pride in their country's career. What a career of prosperity you can look back at! Your country has been victorious in every way. In the short space of 106 years America has, from a confederation of thirteen poor colonies, become one of the mightiest nations upon the earth. (Applause.) Great as her victories upon the field have been, those she has won in the arts of peace have been far greater. No people in the world can set such a record for a country before the nation as can the United States. Love of country with you is largely mixed with pride. And you have a right to be proud. To what in the last hundred years can the Irish look back? Now, pause for a moment and think! You have the consciousness of freedom and liberty, and you have your country's glorious record; you have your flag, at which none of you can look and think of what that flag symbolises without a consciousness of a faster heart-beat, a tingling of every nerve. Oh! glorious banner of human rights, your stars of liberty shine with radiance among the

nations; your bars of red point to the rivers of blood which have been poured out in your defence against wrong and oppression, while your white stripes are but symbols of the peace which awaits beneath your folds the oppressed of every tongue. (Applause.) Float on until wrong and oppression have been banished from earth; float on until freedom is universal; float on until in every nation and every clime in the East and in the West, in the North and in the South, freedom for man and woman shall possess the earth. Then, and not until then, will your mission be accomplished; then, and not until then, can humanity allow the flag of liberty to be furled. (Cheers.) You, then, have your country's record of victories and your consciousness of freedom. My race has been one long struggle, a record of never ceasing struggle against oppression, and of defeat and a consciousness of slavery. Glancing back with the eye of memory, I see the men of my race carrying on their never-ceasing, ever-beginning struggle for freedom, on the mountains and the plains, by the rivers and the sea, in fruitful fields and in the bogland. I see a people who have never been deaf to their country's call. In misery and want and oppression and pain one cry has always been able to raise the Irish heart: "It is for Ireland," and the strong man hesitates not. "It is for Ireland," and the wife bids her husband go. (Applause.) "It is for Ireland," and the mother kisses and blesses her son as he stands upon the threshold. "It is for Ireland," and the maiden waves a farewell to her lover as he tops the distant hill. Children in arms throughout the land have learned love of country as they learned love of God. Grey-haired grandsires have told the wide-eyed boys standing at their knee the story of Irishmen's love for the Emerald land. (Applause.) Seven hundred years has the fight gone on! Seven hundred years has hope, crushed again and again, risen, phoenix-like, as strong as ever. Tell me, you who are blessed with liberty, Does not this race deserve to be free? (Applause.) But to the Irishman, as to other men, the desire for liberty is predominant, a never-crying hunger. As other men, so the Irish grasp at the poor shadow when they cannot get the substance. Liberty being denied in its essentials, there remains to him but one thing—personal independence of support from others. Often, indeed, the cruel hunger has driven the Irishman to the acceptance of the money and food so generously given to him, but when it has been possible for him to support himself, he has done so. As Ireland has no manufactories and no trade, the only way in which the people

have been able to support themselves has been upon the land. The land, then, symbolises to the Irishman the one poor measure of liberty he has known. It is difficult for you to understand what this means, you who have liberty permeating the very air you breathe, but to the Irish the only liberty possible has been self-support. Driven off the land, they have been forced into the workhouse. Is it any wonder, then, that they should love that which represents liberty to them? Is it any wonder that they should feel a double measure of affection for the poor remains of freedom which have been left to them? (Applause.) The emigration of other nations has been a voluntary emigration, that of the Irish has been forced; driven from land, they have had the choice of the workhouse or America. It is a law of human nature that, when men are obliged to give anything up, they value it the more. Not only, then, has the land represented for generations all the liberty they have known to Irishmen, but when they left it, the parting was an involuntary one. These facts will in a measure account, I think, for the love of Irishmen in America for Ireland. But there is another thing. Those who have come to your hospitable shores have left friends and relatives behind; left, not in a state of happiness and prosperity, but oppressed and miserable. God has planted in our breasts a beautiful instinct. We can forget the happy with greater ease than those that are unhappy. (Applause.) The knowledge that those left behind are miserable has kept the thoughts of Irishmen here constantly turning towards the old land. God forbid that I should wish it otherwise. While in the struggle which is now going on in Ireland between the oppressors and the oppressed, Ireland appeals to America for judgment, she also appeals to her sons and daughters here for aid. It is not necessary for me to more than allude to how nobly, how generously, and how effectively that appeal has been answered. (Applause.) I know, as does every man at home, that the Land League struggle has been carried on by the aid of the funds sent from here. We see before us success, but in seeing it we are conscious that it has been won as much by the Irish in America as by the Irish in Ireland. (Applause.) When that success comes, when the hated landlordism has been driven from the soil, when Ireland has independence, then I believe, I know, that oppression and misery in Ireland will cease. The long years through which the struggle has been carried on will seem to us but a dream of the night, dispelled, with all the dark horrors which the night brought with it, by the sun of freedom. Then the plaint that

the Irish citizens of America are less American than they should be will cease. The very love of country which shows itself so strongly now towards Ireland will in turn be directed towards the country of their adoption. They will become American citizens in fact as well as in name. They will identify themselves with the destiny of this great and glorious republic, and they will help to build up America until she attains the position to which she is so rapidly travelling, that of the thought-mistress of the world! (Applause.) No longer distracted by the tales of wrong and injustice which now set their blood on fire, Irishmen will pay a portion of the debt they owe as a part of your people. My race will become as loyal and as true, as firm in battling for the right and as intolerant of wrong, as are your native born. Then across the wide stretch of the laughing sea there will be a free people looking to America with eyes of love. A race with liberty at last will teach their children that to this great republic they owe the priceless boon for which their fathers suffered so long. Then, walking hand in hand down the centuries, America and Ireland will go joined in that union of love which God himself has blessed. What power shall decree divorce between those two?" (Loud and continued applause.)

The trades of New York gave him a grand reception in Union Square, at which from 30,000 to 40,000 working-men of all nationalities were present.

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## CHAPTER XVII.

THE STORY OF THE LAND WAR BY MICHAEL DAVITT—THE ORIGIN, HISTORY, AND OBJECTS OF THE LAND LEAGUE—THE RECORD OF LANDLORDISM—WHAT THE PEOPLE OF IRELAND ARE WORKING FOR—THE SECRET HISTORY OF THE LAND LEAGUE—WHY THERE IS A LAND QUESTION AT ALL.

IT was during this brief but crowded tour that Mr Davitt was interviewed by the special correspondent of the *New York Daily World*, Mr Balch, on the history and workings of the Land League, which interview is here given in full, as copied from that journal:—

### *The Brehon Laws.*

Mr Davitt, upon what does the title to Irish land rest? I mean, How did the ancestors of the present *de facto* owners of the land in Ireland obtain their title to that land?

The original ownership of the land in Ireland rested in the

people themselves, under the Brehon law—Brehon in Irish means judge, and an Irishman would speak of the “Brehon” law just as you would say the national law or the law of the land; now, however, we speak of the Brehon law in the same way as we speak of the Draconian code, and to signify the old law of Ireland before the days of the conquest began. The Brehons were the judges, next in importance to the chiefs, and their persons were sacred, and under the Brehon law the land in Ireland was the absolute property of the people. It was held in commonalty, so much being allotted for pasturage, so much for agriculture and tillage. The lots for the latter were not owned by their occupants, as the title was vested in the people at large. But the occupant of a lot was the owner, *de facto*, as long as he had need of it. Upon his death the land passed to his son, if he had one and if the son wanted it, or to some one else. The chiefs of the tribes, or princes, or kings, for they were called by all these titles, were elected by the people and owned the land, but only as the stewards for the people. To the chief was given several lots of land out of that set apart for tillage, and he had the right of pasturage for his cattle, if he had any. But his ownership differed from the peasant only in degree, not in kind. The chief might own a hundred head of cattle where the peasant had but one. Both chief and peasant got pasturage on the land alike and under the same law. The chief might cultivate one hundred acres and the peasant but one; but both got the land under the same law, and at the death of each the land lapsed to the owners. In other words, under the Brehon law the land was loaned by the people to the individual, and when the individual no longer needed it, it was resumed by the people. In no case was the title parted with, and in no case did the title vest in any individual. I am, of course, not advocating a return to the land system under the Brehon law. That was suited to a people existing under circumstances which have now passed away. I am simply defining what the Brehon law was, as far as my limited knowledge of that ancient code will enable me.

#### *A Change of Titles.*

How did the ownership of the land change, or under what circumstance was title vesting in the individual made a part of Irish land law?

In four different ways:—First, by confiscation and re-grant after conquest; second, by confiscation and re-grant after insurrection, real or alleged; third, after Strafford's examination

into Irish titles; fourth, by the acceptance by the chiefs of a fee title from the English Government. To take them in order: After the time of Elizabeth to that of Cromwell, when a tribe was defeated in battle the land was confiscated and granted to some individual. This title by conquest is a good one by the common consent of society as at present constituted. Putting aside any purely theoretic consideration of it, it is a fact that the titles throughout the world rest to a greater extent upon conquest than upon anything else, and that the world so far will not consent to be upset for injustice which took place centuries ago. There must be a time when the statute of limitations can be pleaded. The world, therefore, will not deny the titles of the landlords in Ireland who trace through numerous assigns to the grantees after confiscation upon conquest. Second—The confiscation after insurrection, in cases where the insurrection absolutely took place, must be regarded as coming under the first head. In strict justice, the confiscation after alleged insurrection could not so plead. An instance of title resting upon this is to be found in the province of Ulster. The O'Neils and the O'Donnells had consented to pay tribute to the Government of Queen Elizabeth. The ancestor of the present Earl of Howth wanted some of the land, and he wrote a letter which was dropped outside of Dublin Castle, in which he said that the two chiefs named were about to rise for independence. Without examination, The O'Donnell and The O'Neil were notified that they would be tried for treason. Knowing that they had no chance before the English court, they fled—the incident is called the Flight of the Princes—and the land of their tribes was confiscated. It was afterwards proved that there was not one word of truth in the accusation, and that the conspiracy had never existed. This was a case of unjust confiscation, or, rather, robbery. This second class also contains the sale of Irish land by James the First to London merchant companies, and the confiscation of land afterwards by no other law than that of might. In Charles the First's time Strafford was sent to Ireland, and he inaugurated the third class of transfers to fee ownerships of Irish land. He instituted an inquiry into Irish titles, and when they were found defective, as they generally were, confiscated the property, or allowed the owner to retain it after the payment of a heavy fine.

*Measures against Independence.*

To understand the fourth class, it is necessary to remember

that all English Governments found that the operation of the Brehon law was to encourage independence, and to cause insurrections against English rule. From the time of Elizabeth, then, it was the object of the rulers to destroy the Brehon law and to substitute for it the fee simple resting in the chief. Many of the chiefs succumbed to the temptation, and took their land from England by grant. They permitted England to change their position from that of stewards of the land for the people into owners of the land by grant. When this was accomplished the chief was goaded to insurrection, or it was alleged that he was going to fight, and his land was confiscated. It became much easier for the Government to convict one man of conspiracy than a whole tribe. When that land was confiscated, the title was ready-made for those to whom it was granted. It was the property of Desmond in the South or O'Neill in the North that was taken away, not the property of the people over whom these chiefs had been elected to rule. Such confiscation was more logical, more apparently just. To convict a people of rebellion is difficult, unless the rebellion actually takes place. To convict an individual is not difficult at all, as I know by experience.

I understand, then, that of the four titles the first is admitted, and the other three are denied?

The present owners of Irish estates are in no way responsible for the methods by which those estates were obtained. In many cases they are owners by purchase, and they have a right to be considered as being the owners, *de facto* and *de jure*, from an English point of view. Their prescriptive right will be maintained by the English Government under any and all circumstances, and confiscation of the Irish estates would never be consented to by such Government. Were the owners to-day those who originally got the land from the Irish, it would be a different matter. But the people of Ireland, who are not landlords, must be considered. Not only have they an inherited right to the land derived from their forefathers who owned it, but they have the inalienable right which inheres in every man to a living by his labour in the land in which he was born. Understand me.

*Why Landlordism must Cease.*

Did the population of Ireland increase to that point that the land would no longer support the people then this right would cease. The surplus population would have to be drafted off by emigration and the land relieved from the burden. But as long

as there is a foot of land in Ireland which is not made to yield its utmost—as long as there is a shilling of surplus yield from the land—the people of Ireland must live. They have a double right. They are Irish men and women, and the land was stolen from their forefathers. There are, then, two rights in the Irish land question which conflict. Both must be respected if right and not wrong would be done. Of these two, that of the people is the greater, because it is a natural right and not an artificial one. That of the landlords is less, because it is created by Government. The less must yield to the greater, because it is natural that it should. But, more than that, the only possible settlement is one by which the less does yield. No natural right can be replaced or an equivalent given for it artificially. The Government cannot substitute anything for the right of the Irish people to earn a living—unless, indeed, it were to support them all, which would be disastrous. But the created right of the landlords can be replaced by substitution. The Government, in times past, has by its action created property for landlords. It can take that property and pay for it. It can substitute another form of property for that which the landlords now own. This is possible and practicable. The less must yield to the greater, because the greater cannot yield to the less. The two rights in direct conflict with each other cannot be allowed to go on, and, as the people cannot go, the landlords must—not with forfeiture or confiscation, but with the value of what is recognised by law as their property, estimated upon a just and proper basis, paid down to them in hard coin. The Land League rests upon truth and justice, and public opinion in America demands that no injustice be done to the Irish landlords. It is the irreconcilable conflict against the violation of the natural right of the Irish people that has led to the land movement.

#### *Causes at Work.*

While this conflict has been the cause of the land movement there must be subdivisions which are worthy of attention—the means by which the conflict has shown itself; the facts which are the practical everyday results of this conflict?

Most certainly. The first of these may be said to be the titles, and the irritating effect upon the people of a knowledge that the land which they pay rent for once belonged to their fathers. I have discussed that question of title, however, and it is not necessary to repeat it. The second cause may be said to consist in the peculiar arrangements existing between Irish



tenants and Irish landlords. I have often heard it said by Americans that the laws in England and Ireland are the same, and that the English people do not make the trouble which the Irish do. The implied and sometimes expressed inference has been that the Irish are a turbulent race. Now, I do not mean to say that my countrymen are the quietest people in the world, but I do mean to say that the Americans who make this statement—honestly, of course—do not understand the difference which exists between landlordism in England and Ireland. While the law in Ireland is not absolutely the same as that in England, it is practically, and I shall not attempt here to dilate upon the slight differences which exist. The reason why landlordism in England and Ireland has produced such strikingly different results is that such an enormous difference exists in the way in which the tenants are treated. The system in operation under the laws is different. Let me contrast the two. In England the landlord is the active partner of the tenant, both having an interest in the land. The landlord makes a part of the improvements. He builds all the buildings and keeps them in repair; he builds the fences, he does the draining, he helps the tenants when any great expenditure is required, and he, as the English landlords nobly did during the last year, voluntarily reduces the rent in times of scarcity. On the other hand, he requires the tenant to keep the land up by a rotation of crops and manuring, by subsoil ploughing, and by careful culture and thorough tilth. In other words, the English landlord and the English tenant are partners in the land, and it is recognised that improvements are for the benefit of both. If the tenant gives up his land, the value of the unexpired improvements is paid to him. Why? Because the landlord recognises the fact that the tenant, as a partner, has invested capital in the land which he has not yet got the benefit of. Finally, the tenant has a lease and a fixed rent. In Ireland the landlord and tenant are partners too, but the landlord is a sleeping partner in the firm. He puts in no money at all.

#### *Landlords in Ireland.*

He makes no improvements, builds no houses or fences, he does no draining, he does nothing except secure rent—or, rather, that is all he did before the agitation began, for he can easily carry the rent he gets now. But, more than that, there being few leases in Ireland, the tenant has no hold upon the land and his rent may be raised at any time. Should the landlord need more money, or be in difficulties, the rent is screwed up a peg.

The rage for land in Ireland and the competition between the tenants were such that a farm could always be rented. More than that, the agents of the absentee landlords had absolute power over the tenants, and under the system which prevailed of giving them a percentage upon what they collected there was a premium to them upon extortion.

If a farmer made any improvement, if he put a new thatch on his house, built a new fence, got another cow or pig, his rent was raised. It was supposed that he was prosperous enough to stand a little higher payment. You cannot imagine the paralyzing effect of this upon the Irish farmers. If they made an investment of any kind, money or labour, more was taken from them. It is this which accounts for Irish squalor and want and poverty, and, when famine came, for Irish mendicancy. The people were not allowed to save money. The object of the agent was to get all that remained after a bare living had been retained. And in many cases they went far beyond this. It is an absolute fact that the holdings in many parts of Ireland only gave the tenants potatoes for the year, and the rent had to be earned in England during the harvest, or be sent by friends from America. If a tenant was evicted, he never received anything at all for any improvements. He was simply put out. You must remember that all this was the state of things when the Land League began its work, because it has been altered of late. We have put an end to rack-renting, and we have stopped the taking of farms from which men had been evicted. There is another thing which must be mentioned as a marked difference between the condition of the English and the Irish tenant. The English tenant has alternative employment; if he could not get along on a farm he could go and get work in a manufacturing town and support his wife and children. But the Irish tenant, if evicted, had but the choice of emigration or the workhouse before him. He was at the mercy of the landlord, and he was forced to pay. He had no alternative employment.

#### *The Effect on Land.*

Under a system like this, with no improvements in the land, did not the land become exhausted?

Only a small portion of the Irish tenants have ever been able to put into operation the rotation of crops which experience in Belgium has proved to be the only system which will keep up the land. This has been partly owing to rack-renting and ignorance, and partly to the lack of the necessary capital. It costs

something to rotate crops, and the only crop the Irish tenants, as a rule, have been able to raise, was that which could be made into food at once. Besides, this rotation of crops is only possible where there are large farms, and the average size of holdings in Ireland is from ten to fifteen acres. There are two classes of farms in Ireland—those which are operated for profit and those which are cultivated for food. In the first, which includes the great stock farms, large amounts of capital are necessary, the farmers have leases, and money is made. In the second there are no leases, and the tenant is at the mercy of the landlord—or was, for this is at an end now. The constant cropping of the ground with potatoes and oats has reduced the soil of Ireland to that point that it will not yield anything like what it would under a different system. The situation in Ireland in all its phases was the direct result of a system which ground the people down to the lowest point of poverty, and, having done so, kept them there.

*The "Ulster Custom."*

But this condition of affairs does not extend over the whole of Ireland. At least I have heard of Ulster tenant-right, and certainly the tenants there cannot be evicted without the purchase of improvements.

That is perfectly true. Ulster tenant-right is a custom which has the force of law, although there is no legal warranty or statute for it. Its origin is exceedingly obscure; at least I have never been able to trace it. It probably is a legacy from the Scotch settlers in the North—the sturdy Presbyterian character would not submit to the exactions which the more impressionable Celt gave way to. Ulster tenant-right is the right which the tenant has to the value of his improvements, and while evictions can take place, they must be preceded by payment for those improvements. In case that a new tenant takes the holding of an old one, he must pay the value of the unexpired improvements. The incoming and the outgoing tenants bargain about this, and settle the price just as any transfer of property may be arranged. The landlord has a veto upon the new tenant. If Pat Murphy agrees to sell his tenant-right to Denis Shaughnessy, the landlord may refuse to receive Denis as his tenant. But in that case the landlord must pay Pat the sum agreed upon between him and Denis, so that the tenant fixes the value of tenant-right, and this value the landlord is forced to accept. The tenants in Ulster, too, had leases, and these two causes, operating together, have accounted for Ulster's prosperity

as compared with the rest of Ireland. The Land Act of Mr Gladstone extends the Ulster tenant-right to the whole of Ireland, and in doing so is a great step in the direction of a proper relation between land and labour. While I will never consent to any compromise with landlordism, it is undoubtedly a fact that some of the scenes of misery and oppression possible in Ireland before the passage of the Land Act are possible no longer.

*The Famine Years.*

Have not the famine years in Ireland, and the misery which has been experienced during these years, been one of the causes which have made the Land League agitation possible?

Unquestionably so. During this century there have been five famines. In 1817, 1823, 1833, 1848, and a partial one in 1879 and 1880. It has been estimated by English statisticians that 2,000,000 of people starved to death during these years. Think of what that means! Two millions of people have died because they could not get bread to put into their mouths. And yet, in spite of the fearful, horrible, and ghastly misery which stalked through the land like a spectre of woe, the landlords of Ireland evicted the tenants because they could not pay the rent. Talk of Shylock's pound of flesh! What was that fancy to such a reality? They turned the people out to starve upon the wayside, trying to eat the grass, in 1848. You cannot believe this, but it is as true as the sunlight. From 1844 to the present time the population of Ireland has decreased over three millions and a half by emigration and famine. Now, if the same causes had been at work in Ireland as have been in operation in England and Wales during the same time, the population of Ireland, instead of being as it is, about 5,000,000, would have been 13,000,000. I am often met by the objection in this country, that if Ireland cannot support her present population, she certainly could not support a larger one. This view of the situation, although based upon an apparently logical idea, is one which is only the result of ignorance of the real situation. There are 21,000,000 acres of land in Ireland. Of these, 12,000,000 are conceded to be as good land as there is in any part of the world, 4,000,000 are suitable for pasturage, and the remaining 5,000,000 are bog, water, and waste. Of the 12,000,000, 5,100,000 are under cultivation, the remainder being given up to the great grazing farms, which were formed chiefly during the famine years. Now, I want you to do a

simple sum in proportion. If 5,000,000 acres of land will support the present population of Ireland, and give the landlords 60,000,000 dols. a year, what population would the 12,000,000 support when the money was spent in the country instead of being, as most of it has been, taken away for the use of absentee landlords? This is a simple sum in proportion which any school-boy can work out, and America being the land of schools, I would like to have the example worked out here. English writers, led by Mr John Stuart Mill, declare that Ireland is able to support with ease from 12,000,000 to 15,000,000 of people.

*Emigration not Needed.*

The emigration of the people, then, is a mistake, because Ireland has a right to her full population as long as she can support them. But the landlords have consistently encouraged emigration, for the simple reason that their object has been to get rid of the Irish race, if possible, and either devote the land to grazing, or get English and Scotch tenants. To return to the famines: there is but one bad season between 300,000 tenant-farmers and famine. The people have been pushed from the good land and forced to reclaim the bad in order that the landlords should make pasture-land. I have seen tenant-farmers in several parts of Ireland renting holdings, the soil of which was so poor that they could only raise potatoes enough to last half the year. The rest of the time they lived upon the earnings during the harvest in England, the contributions from their friends in America, or by begging. Yet they were paying a pound per acre a year for the miserable land, the whole crop of which would only support them for half a year. Where did they get the money? In the same way they got what they lived upon for the remaining months after the potatoes were exhausted. Now, I want you for one moment to think of this calmly and quietly. Think of what it means. Think of the unspeakable lust for gold that would permit of men practising such extortion. Think of this, and tell me if it was not time for landlordism in Ireland to be abolished?

But why on earth did the people live in such a place? Why did they not move?

Simply because there was nowhere else to live. Below those mountains of Connemara, where these people live, extends one of the most fertile tracts of land on earth. For miles upon miles the rich soil is ready to yield up treasures of food. But this soil

is for cattle, the landlords say; the people shall not cultivate it. Under a better system the Irish peasant, once assured of his holding by law and guaranteed his improvements, would make this soil blossom like the rose, would support his wife and children comfortably, and would earn a surplus. But what can he do with such land as he can get? I have already explained to you that there is but the choice of the land, the workhouse, and emigration placed before the peasant. With his passionate attachment to his native soil he clings to Ireland, preferring to live there miserably—how miserably I have not heart to tell you—to a life of comfort elsewhere. But not alone was the land against him; the seed had got so bad that a good crop could not be expected from it.

“ *Re-seeding Ireland.*

I saw in Carraroe the tenantry in 1879 eating their seed potatoes, and I examined the seed. I found that it was in such a state that the least change of temperature would bring on blight. The Land League went to work and purchased £10,000 worth of the “Champion” seed of Scotland for distribution among the Irish. This was thought to be such an excellent idea that the Duchess of Marlborough and the Mansion House Committee applied money to the same object. The Government followed suit, and the result was that, at an expense of about £200,000, Ireland was re-seeded. The result of this has already been shown in the excellent crops, and the new plants are so hardy that the changes in the weather do not affect them scarcely at all. I think that Ireland is safe from the potato blight for many years.

How are these people housed? What kind of places are those out of which they are turned by eviction, and what influence do they have upon the people?

It will scarcely be denied by Americans that few influences operate so powerfully in shaping the moral and intellectual character of a people as those which spring from comfortable, clean, and orderly homes; or the truth of the converse be questioned as to the debasing tendencies of cheerless, squalid, and untidy dwellings. The Census Commissioners for Ireland in 1841 divided the dwellings of the people into four classes: The fourth class comprised all mud-cabins having only one room; the third class consisted of a better description built of mud, but varying from two to four rooms and windows; the first class included all houses of a better description. In the year 1841 there were 574,386 families living in houses of the

third class, or those built of "superior mud," and having two or more rooms, and 625,356 families (over 3,000,000 of human beings) living, or rather herding, in houses of the fourth class, or those built entirely of mud, and having only one room in which to eat, sleep, and perform all domestic duties.

*Lessened by Hunger.*

In 1871 the number of families inhabiting the third class of mud-house was 432,774; those of the fourth class 227,379, or close upon 1,500,000 of people. The returns for the year 1881 are not yet published, but from my knowledge of Ireland I can affirm the only difference that will appear between the figures just given and those which will soon be placed before the public will be the difference caused through diminishing population. These figures show a considerable falling off from those of 1841, 'tis true, but this is not on account of the better class of houses having absorbed the difference, but from the murderous fact that in the space of thirty years no less than 405,141 families, or over 2,000,000 people, including the total increase from births in the meantime, have disappeared from Ireland, most of them starved to death, and buried like dogs during the famine of 1847-48! And all this human misery—this herding in mud-houses, this holocaust of human beings, this diminution of our population, this 1,500,000 Irish people doomed to live at the present hour in these homes of misery, poverty, squalor, and cold—because England resolves it shall be so in the interest of some 10,000 or 15,000 Irish landlords!

*O'Connell and Repeal.*

As one of the great instances of agitation in Ireland, the Repeal movement under O'Connell must be looked upon, I suppose, as a cause of the Land League movement?

The Repeal movement was one of the most formidably organised agitations against the Union of 1800 which was ever made. It was first heard of in 1810, as advocated by the Dublin Corporation, then by no means a representative body. O'Connell threw himself warmly into the movement, declaring that he would be willing to accept Repeal, even though Mr Percival should saddle it with the entire penal code. For years the agitation was kept up by means of the Catholic Association, even when the national element was so disunited and dispirited that it was kept together simply by O'Connell's personal influence. In the year 1825 the Catholic "rent" was established, and in the four years and three months following this rent realised the

amount of £52,266, which was principally devoted to Parliament and other public purposes. In March, 1825, a bill was passed by a vote of 253 to 107 abolishing the Catholic Association, and O'Connell at once set about establishing a new one within the law, which worked so well that one of the first results was the defeat of the Beresfords in their old pocket-borough of Waterford by a vote of 1172 to 501. Finally, in spite of all opposition, Catholic Emancipation was secured, and O'Connell at once proceeded to make sure of it as a stepping-stone towards Repeal. In the next year, 1830, a Repeal Association formed by him was suppressed by the Government. The Repeal question was introduced into Parliament in 1834, in the shape of an amendment to the address, and defeated by 523 to 38 votes. The Lords and Commons presented a joint memorial to the King, assuring him of their determination to maintain the Union. On April 15, 1840, the Loyal National Repeal Association was formed at a meeting held in the Corn Exchange, Dublin. It consisted of three classes—members who subscribed £1, volunteers who subscribed 10s., and associates who subscribed 1s. The association had its lodges and other distinctive marks, and held its meeting in Conciliation Hall, which was specially erected for the purpose. Repeal libraries and reading-rooms sprang up on every side, and O'Connell made a schedule of the counties and boroughs of Ireland that should return members to the new national Parliament which he thought he was about to secure for Ireland. O'Connell was elected Lord Mayor of Dublin in 1841, and in 1843 he absented himself entirely from Parliament, and devoted his whole energies to the organisation of monster mass meetings in various parts of the country. The sum of £48,421 was subscribed during this year, and O'Connell was very hopeful. The final and crowning one of these meetings, all of which were characterised by the most remarkable order and decorum, was arranged to be held on the historic ground of Clontarf on the 8th of October, but late on the preceding evening the Government issued a proclamation forbidding the assemblage; and O'Connell, to avoid any possibility of a collision, despatched mounted messengers in all directions to notify the peasantry that there would be no meeting. One week later, on the 14th, warrants were issued for the arrest of Daniel and John O'Connell, Richard Barrett, Charles Gavan Duffy, John Gray, Thomas Matthew Ray, Thomas Steele, Rev. Thomas Tierney, and Rev. Peter James Tyrrell; the Government, as in recent instances, answering reason by unconstitutional force. The traversers



were put on trial on January 16, 1844, and found guilty, and on May 30 O'Connell was sentenced to one year's imprisonment, a fine of £2000, and was ordered to give bonds in £10,000 to keep the peace for seven years. The others, with the exception of the two priests, one of whom had died in the interim, got nine months' imprisonment and a fine of £50. The judgment was appealed to the House of Lords on a writ of error, and was at once reversed by the highest English legal authorities, but the relief came too late. O'Connell's spirit was broken, and the defection of the Young Ireland party completed the wreck of the great leader.

*Disestablishment of the Irish Church.*

It is generally supposed in this country, Mr Davitt, that the disestablishment of the Irish Church by Mr Gladstone had something to do with the formation of the Land League. Is this so?

To a very small extent, yes. It may be said that in the Irish causes which led to the Land League the disestablishment of the Irish Church was one, while at the same time the disestablishment itself was in no degree the work of the Irish people. For centuries the English Government was represented to the Irish peasant by the Established Church and the landlords. He regarded these two as being the two halves of the whole, that whole being the Government. For centuries he had protested against the Church, but with no avail, until he had come to regard it as being as everlasting as the hills. But in 1869 Mr Gladstone disestablished the Irish Church as a direct result, to use his own words, "of the intensity of Fenianism." There was at the time no agitation among the people, but Mr Gladstone thought that this concession would satisfy and placate the priests. The Irish people had been taught that agitation would make the English Government yield. They were slow to appreciate the importance of this, but in time they realised what it meant, and when the Land League talked of working through the medium of agitation the Irish people had faith in agitation.

What was the condition of Irish parties prior to the formation of the Land League?

In order to answer that question, it will be necessary for me to review the secret societies and political movements in Ireland briefly. For a very long time, prior to 1848, there had existed agrarian secret societies. These were called "White Boys," "Ribbonmen," and various other names. No one of them was universal throughout the country, but all were local; and although some of them embraced two or three counties, they

may be said to have been, speaking in a general way, county societies. In 1848 the Young Ireland party made an abortive attempt at a rising, and two of its members, Colonel John O'Mahony and James Stephens, fled to Paris after the failure. It must be remembered that "Young Ireland" was the extreme left, to adopt the nomenclature of the French, of the Repeal movement. It was the most radical side of the movement, and its members asked for total separation and independence for Ireland, while O'Connell and the Repeal men merely demanded a Repeal of the Act of Union. When O'Mahony and Stephens went to France they became acquainted with the workings of the secret societies of the Continent.

*The Organisation of the Fenian Movement.*

They finally resolved to found a political secret society in Ireland and America. O'Mahony, who was a man deeply read in Irish history, named the members Fenians, after the chosen guards or soldiers of one of the early Irish kings. The "Fenian Militia," as it was called, had been noted for its prowess and effectiveness in the field, and the name was looked upon as being one of the best that could have been chosen, which, in fact, it was. The work of organisation was divided between the two men, Colonel O'Mahony coming to America, and James Stephens going to Ireland. When Stephens arrived in Ireland he travelled through it in the disguise of a French tutor, organising the new society wherever he went. He seized upon the Ribbon Society as a basis for his organisation, that being at that time the most widely-spread agrarian secret society in Ireland. By his exertions the character of the Ribbon Society was to a great extent changed, and it became largely absorbed into the new organisation, the Fenian. I have two faults to find with the Fenian movement, examined politically: First, that under a regulation contained in it any man who initiated ten others became the leader of that ten. In other words, there was the premium of office placed upon initiation, and this led to a hasty choice and a lack of care in the selection of new members. The consequence of this was shown in the crop of informers that sprung up in 1865 and 1867. Second, the Fenians looked upon all men as unworthy the name of Irishmen who refused to join the organisation. An instance of this occurred in 1864, when George H. Moore, A. M. Sullivan, John Martin, and others attempted to revive the Repeal movement, and called a meeting in the Rotundo, in Dublin. The name given to the revived

movement was the National Association. The Fenian party attacked the meeting and broke it up. In this way they committed two great errors. They attacked the right of free speech, imitating the action of the English Government, and they declared war against the most advanced men of the Constitutional party. The loose method of recruiting and the intolerance shown for others who, though differing in opinion, were quite as sincere in their love for Ireland as any man could be, were, in my opinion, radical defects, politically speaking, in the Fenian organisation. But the breaking up of the National Association meeting ended constitutional agitation, and Irish political action was left in the hands of the Fenians. In 1867 the abortive rising of the Fenians took place, and ended as all the world knows. There were at that time two factions among the Fenians, and the rising took place actually before the time set for it, being precipitated by one faction in order to show the organisation in America that it controlled the movement in Ireland.

*Amnesty and Home Rule Movements.*

That failure almost destroyed the Fenian party, and it has never recovered from the effects. The captured Fenians were placed on trial and imprisoned. In 1868 the amnesty movement was started by Isaac Butt, John Nolan, and others; large demonstrations were organised, public meetings held, and a monster petition was presented to Parliament. It is worthy of comment at this point that this was the last time a petition to Parliament was presented in connection with Irish affairs. From its inception the Land League has left petitions severely alone. The amnesty movement was a success, and all of the prisoners charged with treason, with the exception of myself, were released in 1870. Mr Isaac Butt, counsel for the Fenians during their trials, and John Nolan, had organised and run the amnesty movement. The success of agitation in this case led Mr Butt to form the Home Rule League. This was done by the machinery which had been employed during that agitation being simply continued with a new object. The Nationalists co-operated with the Home Rulers; but when, after the election of 1874, Mr Butt stood in Parliament the leader of sixty members, he repudiated the Nationalists, and said that the time had gone by when any man could stand upon a public platform and ask for the separation of Ireland from England. This declaration led to antagonism between the Home Rulers and the advanced Nationalists. The method pursued by Mr Butt and the Home Rulers in Parliament

is, perhaps, worth a word. Once a year Mr Butt would rise and make a very temperate speech, in which he would make out a splendid case for Home Rule. When he sat down Mr Disraeli would rise, compliment Mr Butt upon his pacific method of treating the subject, divide the House against the motion, and of course beat it by an immense majority. This was all.

*Obstruction Begun.*

Home Rule rested quietly until the next session. This policy of conciliation did not suit some members of the Home Rule party at all. They wanted to see more done, and Mr Biggar was the first to inaugurate the policy of obstruction. The idea of obstruction was, in a few words, this: The Obstructionists started in with the theory that the duty of a member of Parliament should be carried out to the fullest extent. It had been the custom in the English House of Commons to permit the majority of the bills to pass with but little inquiry into them. Theoretically, each member was supposed to examine into everything upon which he voted, but practically this was not done. For the purpose of proving, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that the administration of Irish local affairs in England was an impossibility, even if it was properly done, the Irish members began the work of critically examining into every section of every bill introduced. There are 105 members of Parliament from Ireland out of the whole number of 650. Only a few of the Irish members were Obstructionists, but those that were showed by their work that if all the members of the House of Commons undertook to do their work properly, and in fact as they should do it, it would be impossible for the local affairs of England, Ireland, and Scotland to be administered, and, at the same time, attention be given to the affairs of the empire. The *modus operandi* of obstruction, as it is called, is briefly this: Every clause in every bill to be discussed by every member; every item of public expenditure to be criticised in the yearly estimates. A member—for example, Parnell—gets up and asks the Secretary for Ireland a long string of questions. In order to answer these, the telegraph is set at work, and Ireland is ransacked from one end to the other for information. Or Sexton will ask questions about England, or O'Donnell will read his list about Egypt or Africa. You see, all these young men work hard—and the questions asked by them are all pertinent. The outcome has been curious in one respect, for they have done great good to England. Prison discipline was

reformed and flogging in the army and navy put an end to by the work of the Obstructionists. The Irish members denounced the Zulu war, and O'Donnell prophesied exactly what took place at the time. Of course, in matters relating to Ireland, the Irish members are supplied with an enormous mass of information by the Land League, and they are often ahead of the Government in obtaining news. But this is rather getting ahead of my subject. When obstruction was begun by Mr Biggar, it was more for the purpose of showing the absurd disproportion existing between the resources of the Government in the way of legislation and the amount of work to be done. In this it was thoroughly successful. The Obstructionists were the Left of the Home Rule party, and gradually gained the confidence of the people. When I came out of prison, in 1877, the political situation, as far as Ireland was concerned, was the Home Rule party divided into two parts—those who were still in favour of the policy of conciliation, and those who believed in obstruction; and a strong antagonism existing between the Home Rulers and the advanced Nationalists.

#### *The Inception of the League.*

Now, Mr Davitt, to sum up as far as we have got, we have examined into the causes which led to the Land League movement. We have examined into the titles to Irish lands, their origin and history; the improvements by tenants and the conditions under which they were made; the effect upon the land of the constant cropping; the famines and their results; the habitations of the people and their effect upon the peasantry; the disestablishment of the Irish Church and the result upon the popular mind; the influence of Repeal agitation; the secret societies and the political changes prior to the 19th of December, 1877. This brings us, then, to the Land League movement itself. What were the first steps taken to bring it about?

When I was in prison I spent my time thinking of what plan could be proposed which would unite all Irishmen upon some one common ground. I saw that the movements for the independence of Ireland had failed for two reasons. First, that there had never been one in which the people were united. Second, because the movements had been wholly sentimental. I saw that for Irishmen to succeed they must be united, and that they must have a practical issue to put before Englishmen and the world at large. Sentiment cannot be relied upon to move neighbouring nations, and when changes of great political

importance, involving an alteration in the policy of a country like England, conservative and somewhat slow to move, are to be brought about, there must be something practical in the issue put forward. I saw all this, and I made up my mind that the only issue upon which Home Rulers, Nationalists, Obstructionists, and each and every shade of opinion existing in Ireland could be united was the land question. I at first proposed my plan to leaders of the Nationalists when a short time out of prison, but they refused to have anything to do with constitutional agitation. Among nations of the present day, secret political associations are an anomaly. Do not misunderstand me. If the right of free speech be denied them, in my opinion, in order that men may meet to plan, deliberate, and resolve upon the methods which remain to them of winning justice by giving a voice to the grievances under which they labour, of putting their case clearly before the world and constituting the world the judge between themselves and tyranny, they have a right to form themselves into a secret association. If meetings in public cannot take place, meetings in private should, because before all things it is necessary to show some front to tyranny and injustice.

### *The Power of Opinion.*

If the weak have a just cause they can, by presenting its claims to recognition, force the strong to grant them justice. They can do this purely as the result of public opinion—in other words, influencing the party of the strong in their favour by winning public opinion on their side. Now, it must be perfectly apparent to every one that if you wish to reach public opinion and to influence it, you must do everything openly. The converse of this would be so absurd that it is scarcely worth discussing. A secret society, then, makes the use of the only weapon of the weak if not impossible exceedingly difficult. I therefore resolved that my new plan in connection with Ireland should not be placed for operation in the hands of any one party, although I was willing, if the Nationalists chose to adopt it as a new departure, to let them inaugurate it. They refused, however. I visited personally every man who was at all prominent in connection with Irish affairs, and in order to find out the state of feeling here I came to this country upon a lecturing tour. I went all through, and satisfied myself that the issue was one which would be adopted by the Irish in America. More than that, I convinced myself that the issue was one which would command the respect of the Americans themselves.

These two conclusions having been arrived at, I spoke in Boston in November, 1878, and outlined the new departure.

*The Boston Speech.*

“For the present good of Ireland, and as a policy of expediency, I, as a Nationalist, could support the following programme consistently with my own principles and Ireland’s present wants:—

“1. The first and indispensable requisite in a representative of Ireland in the Parliament of England to be a public profession of his belief in the inalienable right of the Irish people to self-government, and recognition of the fact that want of self-government is the chief want of Ireland.

“2. An exclusive Irish representation, with the view of exhibiting Ireland to the world in the light of her people’s opinions and national aspirations, together with an uncompromising opposition to the Government upon every prejudiced or coercive policy.

“3. A demand for the immediate improvement of the land system by such a thorough change as would prevent the peasantry of Ireland from being its victims in the future. This change to form the preamble of a system of small proprietorships similar to what at present obtains in France, Belgium, and Prussia. Such land to be purchased or held directly from the State. To ground this demand upon the reasonable fact that, as the land of Ireland formerly belonged to the people (being but nominally held in trust for them by chiefs or heads of clans elected for that among other purposes), it is the duty of the Government to give compensation to the landlords for taking back that which was bestowed upon their progenitors after being stolen from the people, in order that the State can again become the custodian of the land for the people-owners.

“4. Legislation for the encouragement of Irish industries; development of Ireland’s natural resources; substitution, as much as practicable, of cultivation for grazing; reclamation of waste land; protection of Irish fisheries, and improvement of peasant dwellings.

“5. Assimilation of the county to the borough franchise, and reform of the grand jury laws, as also those affecting convention in Ireland.

“6. A national solicitude on the question of education by vigorous efforts for improving and advancing the same, together

with every precaution to be taken against it being made an anti-national one.

“‘7. The right of the Irish people to carry arms.’”

After the Boston speech outlining the policy, how was the plan introduced into Ireland?

I went into the West of Ireland, on my return, when I found that my plan was denounced by the leaders and the organ of the Nationalists. I saw the priests, the farmers, and the local leaders of the Nationalists. I inquired and found that the seasons of 1877 and 1878 had been poor, and that a famine was expected in 1879. All the farmers and cottiers were in debt to the landlords and shopkeepers. One day, in Claremorris, county Mayo—it was in March, 1879—I was in company with John W. Walsh, of Balla, who was a commercial traveller. He is now in Australia in the interests of the Land League. He knew the circumstances of every shopkeeper in the West of Ireland—their poverty and debt, and the poverty of the people. He gave me a great deal of valuable information. I met some farmers from Irishtown, a village outside of Claremorris, and talked to them about the crops and the rent. Everywhere I heard the same story, and I at last made a proposition that a meeting be called in Irishtown to give expression to the grievances of the tenant-farmers, and to demand a reduction of the rent. We were also to urge the abolition of landlordism. I promised to have the speakers there, and they promised to get the audience. I wrote to Thomas Brennan, of Dublin, John Ferguson, of Glasgow, and other Irishmen known for their adherence to Ireland's cause, and I drew up the resolutions.

#### *The Meeting at Irishtown.*

The meeting was held, and was a great success, there being between 10,000 and 12,000 men present. In the procession there were 1500 men on horseback, marching as a troop of cavalry; and this feature, inaugurated at Irishtown, has been continued ever since at every meeting of the Land League. The meeting was not fully reported in the Dublin papers, but was, as far as the object went, a success, for the landlords of the neighbourhood reduced the rents 25 per cent. Several meetings followed, carried out chiefly by the Nationalists of Mayo—I do not mean by them as a society, but as individuals. To them justly belongs the credit of having kept the land agitation alive at this time in Mayo. The next large meeting was held at Westport, and it was then that Mr Parnell and I first stood upon



a platform together in Ireland. At that meeting, too, Mr Parnell first gave utterance to the saying, which is now a household word in Ireland, "Keep a firm grip of your homesteads," and I used the words "The Land for the people." Prior to that meeting a letter was published in the *Freeman's Journal* from the one most influential man in all Ireland, the Archbishop of Tuam. By his unwearied love for the Irish people, his unceasing efforts in their behalf, his high character and his personal worth, Archbishop M'Hale had won the admiration and love of every Irishman. His letter in the *Journal* condemned the Westport meeting, and I went to see Mr Parnell as soon as I read it. I asked him if he intended going down to Westport in spite of the letter, and I shall never forget his reply: "Certainly I do. The people have invited me, and no man could stay me." The meeting was an enormous one, and was followed by the usual reduction of rent. I should say here that it is generally believed in Ireland that Archbishop M'Hale did not write that letter, although his signature was put to it. This was in May. The week after there was a monster meeting at Milltown, at which there were 20,000 men, 4000 being on horseback.

*First Notice in Parliament.*

This meeting was asked about in the House of Commons, and the Secretary for Ireland, Mr James Lowther, said, in reply to the question, that the speakers were "the editor of a local paper" (James Daly), "a clerk in Dublin" (Thomas Brennan), "a discharged schoolmaster" (Malachi Sullivan), "and a convict at large on ticket-of-leave" (myself). This answer created, as you may suppose, a great deal of laughter in the House. Shortly after this a meeting took place at Ballyhaunis, to which the Archbishop of Tuam was invited. In his reply, which was more conciliatory than his first letter, he alluded to me as an "unknown, strolling man." I replied to his letter, pointing out that as I was born in the county where the meetings were being held, I could not well be unknown in that part of Ireland; and that as I was the son of an evicted tenant-farmer, I could claim the right to strive against the system that brought about evictions. This continuance of the land agitation, in spite of the opposition of the archbishop, is of great importance. Not alone from his position, but from the personal love and veneration felt for him by every one in Ireland, there was not one man whose influence was so powerful. Yet the action of the people showed that they did not intend to stop the work, no matter who opposed them.

*The Constitution for Mayo Land League.*

From Mayo, how did the movement spread ?

Gradually to Galway and Sligo. Brennan and I, together with local speakers, went on with the work. Reduction of rents generally followed the meetings. At last I thought that a nucleus of some kind was needed, and I founded the Land League of Mayo, writing for it the following constitution :—

“ This body shall be known as the National Land League of Mayo, and shall consist of farmers and others who will agree to labour for the objects here set forth, and subscribe to the conditions of membership, principles, and rules specified below.

“ Objects—The objects for which this body is organised, are :—

“ 1. To watch over the interests of the people it represents, and protect the same, as far as may be in its power to do so, from an unjust or capricious exercise of power or privilege on the part of landlords, or any other class in the community.

“ 2. To resort to every means compatible with justice, morality, and right reason, which shall not clash defiantly with the constitution upheld by the powers of the British empire in this country, for the abolition of the present land laws of Ireland, and the substitution in their place of such a system as shall be in accord with the social rights and the interests of our people, the traditions and moral sentiments of our race, and which the contentment and prosperity of our country imperiously demand.

“ 3. Pending a final and satisfactory settlement of the land question, the duty of this body will be to expose the injustice, wrong, or injury which may be inflicted upon any farmer in Mayo, either by rack-renting, eviction, or other arbitrary exercise of power which the existing laws enable the landlords to exercise over their tenantry, in giving all such arbitrary acts the widest publicity, and meeting their perpetration with all the opposition which the laws for the preservation of peace will permit of. In furtherance of which the following plan will be adopted: (a) Returns to be obtained, printed, and circulated of the number of landlords in this county, the amount of acreage in possession of same, and the means by which such lands were obtained; the farms held by each, with the conditions under which they were held by the tenants, and the excess of rent paid by same over the Government valuation. (b) To publish, by placard or otherwise, notice of contemplated evictions for nonpayment of exorbitant rent or other unjust cause, and the convening of a public meeting, if deemed necessary or expedient,

as near the scene of such evictions as circumstances will allow, and on the day fixed upon for the same. (c) The publication of a list of evictions carried out, together with cases of rack-renting, giving full particulars of same, name of landlord, agents, &c., concerned, and the number of people evicted by such acts. (d) The publication of the names of any persons who shall rent or occupy land or farms from which others have been dispossessed for nonpayment of exorbitant rents, or who shall offer higher rent for land or farms than that paid by the previous occupier. (e) The publication of reductions of rent and acts of justice or kindness performed by landlords of the county.

"4. This body to undertake the defence of such of its members, or others of local clubs affiliated with it, who may be required to resist by law actions of landlords or their agents who may purpose doing them injury, wrong, or injustice in connection with their land or farms.

"5. To render assistance, when possible, to such farmer members as may be evicted or otherwise wronged by landlords or their agents.

"6. To undertake the organisation of local clubs or defence associations in the baronies, towns, and parishes of this county, the holding of public meetings and demonstrations on the land question, and the printing of pamphlets on that and other subjects for the information of the farming classes.

"7. Finally, to act as a vigilance committee in Mayo, noting the conduct of grand jury, poor-law guardians, town-commissioners, and members of Parliament, and pronounce on the manner in which their respective functions are performed, whenever the interests, social or political, of the people represented by this club render it expedient to do so.

"*Conditions of Membership.*—First, to be a member of any local club or defence association in the county, and to be selected by such club or association to represent the same in the central or county association. Second, a desire to co-operate in the carrying out of the foregoing objects and subscribing to the principles here enunciated, with a view of propagating the same, and labouring for their successful application in Ireland, will qualify non-representative farmers or others for membership in this body, subject to the subscription and rules laid down for same. Third, to pay any sum not under five shillings a year towards the carrying out of the foregoing objects and the end for which this body is created—namely, the obtaining of the soil of Ireland for the people of Ireland."

*The Widening Circles in the Pool.*

The agitation still spread, taking in Munster and Leinster, and, to a less extent, Ulster. All of this time there was no central organisation. Meetings would be held over the country, and Parnell, Dillon, and Brennan would be invited to attend. The different local secretaries were in constant communication with me, and I found the absolute necessity for some system. In October, I proposed to Mr Parnell that an organisation—to be called the Irish National Land League—should be formed for the purpose of directing and controlling the agitation, and to overthrow landlordism. This was done, and an appeal was issued to the whole Irish race, stating the objects of the movement, the means which would be taken to bring about those objects, and the help which any and all were expected to give. With the formation of the National Land League and the issuance of that manifesto the movement proper may be said to have been started. At first, and until they came to the conclusion that the movement was based upon just principles, the Catholic clergy held aloof from it. Some, as I already pointed out in my reference to Archbishop M'Hale's letter, condemned it, while others were content to let it alone. This influence caused the work at first to be difficult, but it was surmounted either wholly or in part in time.

*The Secret History of the League.*

But, Mr Davitt, such work as you describe must have cost some money. You had no organisation to draw from. Where, then, did the money come from?

Local committees would collect the fund necessary to erect platforms, pay for printing, and help to defray the travelling expenses of speakers. Some of the expenses incurred were met by me out of a testimonial with which I was presented on my release from prison. Mr Parnell and some other speakers usually paid their own travelling expenses.

In this manner the agitation was carried on from its inception to August, 1879. Here I must give you a piece of "secret history" in connection with the agitation. In August, 1879, two months before the National Land League was organised, seeing that some money was necessary, I put myself in communication with Patrick Ford, of the *Irish World*; John Boyle O'Reilly, of the *Boston Pilot*; John Devoy, the late Patrick Mahon, of Rochester; and Dr William Carroll, of Philadelphia. I represented to them, as personal friends of mine and representative men in America, the importance of this agitation in Ireland.

What had been done up to that time had received very little attention in America except in the *Irish World* and the *Boston Pilot*. I told them the agitation had been carried on to that point at the personal expense of a few men, and that in order that it should be made a great movement it would be necessary to start an auxiliary movement in America, so as to allow those who had been driven out of Ireland by landlordism to co-operate with us in our efforts to drive landlordism out in turn. As these gentlemen had assisted me before in organising a lecturing tour through America, on the occasion of my first visit, I wrote to request this assistance again for a second tour for the benefit of agitation in Ireland, and for the purpose of explaining its objects and scope to the people of America. The answer to these letters was from Patrick Ford. He enclosed a draft of £303 8s, and intimated that the money was advanced to him by the trustees of the National Fund, to be sent to me to aid me in carrying on the movement in Ireland, and to obviate the necessity of my coming to America to lecture in order to procure funds. He thought, as the National Fund had been subscribed by victims of landlordism, no one would object to have some of the money used against landlordism in Ireland. I wish to emphasise the fact that I had made no demand or request for any part of the National Fund, but that the money was sent in answer to my request for assistance in a lecturing tour. In a few months I found that parties were making use of my name in connection with the National Fund, and statements were made that the fund had been used in the organisation of the National Land League. This is not true; not one cent of it was ever used in the organisation of that body. A portion of that received by me was used in defraying the expenses by speakers, printing pamphlets, and other work necessary to be done at first. Hearing of these misrepresentations, I wrote to the men I had written to at first, and told them that I should consider the £303 8s a personal debt. During my last lecturing tour in 1880, I paid £200, and the balance, £103 8s, I have paid back since my arrival on this tour. When Mr Parnell, Mr Dillon, and others heard afterwards of the transaction, and the stories set in circulation about it, they wanted to pay the money out of the Land League Funds. This I refused, as I said it was a personal debt which I preferred to settle myself.

#### *The First State Trials.*

What was the next step of importance in the movement?

The National Land League was formed on the 21st of

October, 1879, and Mr Parnell appointed president. On the 10th of November following, Mr Brennan, Daly, Killen, and I were arrested for seditious language used at the meeting in Sligo. Disraeli did not press matters, however, and, after a brief trial, the prosecution was allowed to drop. The extreme value of the arrest to the League was owing to the importance given to it. There were over thirty special correspondents present, and the trial was very fully reported in the Irish, English, and American papers. The prisoners were interviewed, and the result was that the reasons for, and the aims of, the new movement became fully spread abroad among the people. The abandonment of the prosecution by the Government gave an enormous impetus to the movement, and the Land League spread with extraordinary rapidity throughout Ireland.

#### *Predictions of Famine.*

The leaders of the Land League then warned the Government that a famine was coming. This the Government promptly denied, but within two months it was forced to acknowledge that the Land League was right, and that a partial famine was certain. It being found that assistance would be needed, in December, 1879, Mr Parnell and Mr Dillon came to America to explain the objects of the League, and to solicit assistance for the suffering people. This you can see at once was bringing about a change in the League from a purely social and political movement to one of relief. This was rendered necessary, not alone by the demands of humanity, but by those of policy as well. The result was beyond our most sanguine expectations. The relief given, in addition to the fact that owing to the advice of the League the farmers "ate their rents," prevented a renewal of the scenes of '48, and, although a few died of starvation, the people tided over the famine with comparative ease.

#### *Attempts at Suppression.*

Were there no other attempts made by the Government to suppress the Land League besides the arrests you have just spoken of?

The first notice taken officially by the Government of the agitation was in answer to the questions put to Mr Lowther, the then Chief Secretary for Ireland, after the Milltown meeting. From that time the attempts to suppress it were constant. Large bodies of constabulary were sent to the meetings for the purpose of intimidation. Government shorthand reporters were

sent to take down the words used. This is an old device, dating from before the time of O'Connell. I suppose you have heard the story of how O'Connell, after making every preparation for the convenience of the Government shorthand writer, delivered his speech in Irish, thereby rendering it impossible for the Englishman to follow him. That was a joke which is still laughed at in Ireland. The Government organs were calling loudly for the suppression of the Land League by force. As a matter of course, I was constantly threatened with the withdrawal of my ticket-of-leave. The landlord members of Parliament were continually calling upon the Government to take measures to suppress the League, and the Government were busily looking for an excuse to do so. But as the measures which had been adopted by the League to give expression to its views were strictly constitutional, no such excuse could be found. Matters continued in this way until the general election of 1880.

That election altered the status of the League enormously, did it not?

It resulted in a Parliamentary representation for the League. At the time the majority of the constituencies were represented by the landlords and the Home Rulers, and when the election came off it was decided by the League to make a fight. Mr Parnell and Mr Dillon were in this country when Parliament dissolved, but they hurried back to Ireland, and as a result of deliberation it was resolved to concentrate the strength of the League in Leinster, Munster, and Connaught. The result was

#### *An Overwhelming Victory,*

such strong landlords as Kavanagh, Bruen, and King Harman being defeated, and young Land Leaguers like Sexton, T. P. O'Connor, and others being returned—Mr Parnell himself being returned for three constituencies, an honour never before conferred on any member, English or Irish. The great increase of strength given to Mr Parnell in the House of Commons gave increased strength to the League at large, and the people were, of course, greatly encouraged by the result. The Land League rapidly became the strongest power in Ireland. Mr Butt had been succeeded in the chairmanship of the Irish party in Parliament by Mr Shaw, both being Home Rulers. After the election of 1880, Mr Parnell was elected to succeed Mr Shaw, as the majority of the 103 members of Parliament from Ireland were Land Leaguers. Immediately after the election I came to America in order to perfect the auxiliary organisation already

formed here. Soon after my arrival a Land League Convention took place in this city, the constitution and rules were adopted, and I was elected the secretary, which position I held until the organisation was practically in shape.

*The Organisation in America.*

Mr Dillon was present at that convention, and then, as since, gave great assistance in the work of organisation. A number of priests were present also, a fact significant of the general approval given at this time to the movement by the clergy. Among them were Father Cronin, of Buffalo, and Father Walsh, of Waterbury, Conn. The latter was elected treasurer, an office he has held since, and in which he has been of the greatest possible service to the League. I am not exaggerating when I say that Father Walsh's labours have been of incalculable value. After the convention I went upon a lecturing tour from New York to San Francisco, during which I organised branches of the League in every town and city. Large amounts of money began to pour in, being sent to Father Walsh or direct to the treasurer of the Irish Land League, Patrick Egan. The largest subscription was sent through the *Irish World*. It is but justice to Mr Ford that I should state in this most public manner the work he has done for the League. His support has never wavered for a moment, and his paper has always been foremost in doing anything and everything which it could in behalf of the movement. During my trip I found all classes willing and glad to support the League. At the end of six months I returned to Ireland, and found that the Liberal Government of Mr Gladstone had begun proceedings against Mr Parnell and the executive of the Land League. I had found, during my trip to America, that the tone of the American press was somewhat against the movement in Ireland, in consequence of the outrages which had been committed. This caused me to think that the best thing that I could do would be to preach a crusade against outrage, and to beat down the spirit of religious animosity in Ulster. This spirit being particularly strong between the Catholics and Protestants, I went to Ulster, where the Orangemen are most numerous, and organised meetings. I pointed out the folly of faction strife, and I found that my remarks were very well received. In fact, had I had a few months more I would have brought the whole province into the League. The Government, realising that my success meant the destruction of their favourite device in Irish politics, division



among the people themselves, had me arrested and placed in Portland Prison, where I remained fifteen months. My absence from the field did not, however, stop the League in its work. Before my arrest, Messrs Parnell, Dillon, Brennan, Kettle, Egan, Sexton, T. D. Sullivan, Harris, Boyton, and P. J. Sheridan were summoned. With the exception of the two last they were all members of the executive. With this began the State trials.

*The Second Prosecution.*

Did these injure the League?

Not at all. By the management of the prisoners they were turned into League demonstrations. All the speeches which had been made were re-read. The question which was squarely at issue was: Is the Land League an illegal organisation? A special jury was struck, and the ablest members of the Irish bar were retained for the Government. Speeches, pamphlets, and documents which had been seized by the police were brought forward. The trial lasted seventeen days, and the jury stood ten for the Land League and two against. An incident of the trial is worth recording. Prior to the trial itself, Mr Parnell and Mr Egan, on behalf of the "traversers," as those summoned to appear were called, applied to Lord Chief Justice May for a warrant suspending the *Dublin Evening Mail*, on the ground that it was publishing articles calculated to prejudice the cause of the Land Leaguers. In discussing the application, the Lord Chief Justice indulged in a most bitter attack upon the League in general, and Mr Dillon in particular. Not long after, Mr Dillon made a speech in which he defined a liar as one who wilfully framed an untruth and as wilfully uttered it! He then applied the definition to the Lord Chief Justice. When the trial began, the Lord Chief Justice read a statement, in which he referred to Mr Dillon's speech, and stated that he withdrew from the case. Every one knew he was forced to do this by the Government for the sake of appearances. This triumph gave the League enormous power both in Ireland and America, and the subscriptions nearly doubled. During some weeks they would amount to several thousand pounds from this country. Those from Ireland amounted to even more; for when the tenant-farmers saw us beat the Government the League virtually became the ruling power in Ireland. Sir Stafford Northcote admitted this in the House of Commons. The Government, having twice failed in their endeavour to get the League declared illegal, brought forward the Coercion Act, or Mr Forster's Repres-

sion Bill, as it is generally called. This brings us to the time when the Government declared open war against the League.

*How the League Worked.*

Before going any further, Mr Davitt, what were the measures taken by the League which had so angered the Government?

First, its demand for the abolition of a system that has always been England's garrison in Ireland, and its advice to the people to pay only such rent as they could spare after feeding their families. Next, what is ordinarily known as boycotting. This practice was borrowed from the landlords, and, like all weapons taken from their armoury, proved exceedingly effective. In the old days, if a landlord evicted a tenant, whoever gave that tenant shelter or food did so at his peril. If you knew Pat Murphy, and Pat was evicted, you would like to give him the shelter of your roof for a night and a meal in the morning. If he could sleep out and go hungry, you would at any rate shelter and feed his wife and little ones. Well, if you did, your rent would be raised, or you would be evicted in turn. The landlords called this discouraging people from giving aid to persons being punished. We call it boycotting. When boycotting was turned against the landlords they found out what an exceedingly wicked practice it was for the first time. Second, the Land League sustained all evicted tenant-farmers. This fact enabled the farmers to defy the landlords, because they could do so without fear. Third, whenever the League heard of an impending eviction they held a meeting as near the scene as possible and in the most public manner denounced the landlords and assured the tenants of support. Fourth, the League organised the tenants, and sent them in a body to demand a reduction of rents. They prevented the acceptance of reduction of rent by individuals as far as possible.

What was the *personnel* of the League at this time?

A few of the gentry had joined it, but not very many. It was a democratic movement from the first, started by the people for the people and conducted by the people. At first the priests were afraid of it, but when they saw the kind of movement it was they joined it. Archbishop Croke's defence of the League was of enormous value to it, as all the Catholic clergy, with but few exceptions, took their tone from it.

*Parliamentary Tactics.*

The Land League, having got a decided representation in

Parliament, and being sufficiently strong to elect Mr Parnell to the chairmanship of the Irish delegation, what policy did it adopt in its Parliamentary tactics?

It can scarcely be said that the League had any specific policy in Parliament. Attacks were made by the landlord representatives upon the League and its exponents in the House of Commons, and, of course, the Irish members, under Mr Parnell, met these attacks and defended the League upon any and every opportunity. Whenever a discussion could be brought about which would enable the representatives of the Land League to define its policy and explain its objects, it was always done. The representatives were always bringing the case before the bar of public opinion, being confident that by so doing the principles which underlaid the movement would win. Any action by the Government aimed at the League—such as the suppression of meetings, persecution of Land Leaguers, or attempts to break up the organisation—would be sharply criticised by Mr Parnell and the Irish members. During such criticisms they often would have a chance to rehearse the whole question, and would bring all the points involved before the English people. No opportunity to discuss and defend the programme of the League was lost. Questions about evictions, rack-renting, and other acts of the landlords, were asked the Government. The one object was to give publicity to the movement and all that was connected with it.

### *Policy of Parties.*

What was the policy of the Conservative party in the matter?

At first the Conservatives denounced the League bitterly, and demanded my arrest. They called the agitation "communistic"—a word, by the way, which is often applied to it for some reason or other—and urged the Government to suppress it. Suddenly, however, their leader, Lord Salisbury, turned around and announced that he was in favour of a peasant proprietary. This was done, I believe, in order to prevent the agitation from spreading into England, for of all things the Conservatives are afraid that the question of land may be raised in England. Mr Cowen, the member for Newcastle, said an amusing thing in connection with this change of base, and the equally sudden change of the Liberals, when Mr Parnell was in Kilmainham. He got up and began:—"Inasmuch as the Government has practically adopted the policy of Mr Davitt"—(loud and derisive

cheers from the Conservatives)—“and as the House of Lords have practically accepted his programme”—(loud and derisive cheers from the Ministerial benches)—“should not Mr Gladstone instruct Her Majesty to give Mr Davitt a free pardon, in order that he may enter the House of Commons to explain his ideas?” “Many a true word is spoken in jest,” they say, and there was not a little truth in what Mr Cowen said, except in the supposition that I would enter that assembly.

### *The Liberal Organisation.*

The Conservatives submitted at last, then, in order to prevent what they considered a worse state of affairs? What attitude did the Liberals take?

There is a radical difference in the constitution of the Liberal and Conservative parties in England which must be pointed out. The Conservatives are a unit; as one votes so does the other. The Liberals, on the other hand, consist of four distinct parties or factions—first, the Liberal Conservatives, or Whigs, represented by such men as Lord Hartington; second, Liberals, as Mr Gladstone and Mr Bright; third, Radicals, as Sir Charles Dilke, Mr Chamberlain, and Mr Mundella; and, fourth, Democrats, as Mr Cowen and Mr Labouchere.

The Liberal party were by no means a unit against the Land League. The Liberal-Conservatives were and are opposed to it; the Liberals were opposed, but were compelled by the League to legislate upon land questions and to recognise the League as the directing power in Ireland; the Radicals were sympathetic on the land question and on Home Rule; and the Democrats were thoroughly in favour of the League programme and self-government for Ireland. It followed, therefore, that in the operations of Mr Gladstone's Government against Ireland he could not always count upon a full endorsement of his plans or united support among his own followers. This diversity of opinion has always been taken advantage of by Mr Parnell and his followers to the fullest extent, and it has been found that in it lay their best chance of success. When Disraeli was alive he was opposed to the League, and the first State trial, that of myself and Mr Brennan, was ordered by him. He dropped the prosecution owing to a discovery that it would fail, and in consequence of the nearness of the General Election. It is possible that had he lived he might have seen fit to consider the demands of the League, but it is idle speculating upon what might have been.

*The Introduction of the Gag Law.*

Did not the course of the Land League members of Parliament bring about the adoption of the so-called gag law?

The adherence of the Irish members to the policy of obstruction, and the complete success of that policy in showing the impossibility of doing the work thrown upon Parliament in case each member attempted to do his duty, forced the Government to cast about for some measure of relief. In the French Chamber of Deputies there is a law called the *clôture*. By it the president can, when he considers a debate has lasted long enough, or when he thinks the subject is exhausted, order that the question be put to the vote. Mr Gladstone proposed that this power be given to the Speaker of the House of Commons. A resolution was, however, passed, which gave the Speaker power to "name a member, if he considered that the member was delaying the business of the House." The result, when this is done, is that the member named may be expelled for a night, a week, or a month, as the House may decide. It is, of course, an arbitrary device to give the Government, in the person of the Speaker, power to put an end to discussion at any time, and it practically puts an end to free speech in the House. The tyrannical manner in which this power may be exercised was amusingly shown by the expulsion of the Irish members a few nights ago. One of those "named" had not been in the House during the discussion, and had only come in when the Speaker was "naming" those who were to be deprived of the power to represent their constituents in the "Temple of Free Speech," as Mr Bright once called the House of Commons. The Speaker, happening to see this gentleman as he entered the House, included his name among the others, on the principle, I suppose, of clearing them all out at once.

*The Organisation in America.*

During this whole time, Mr Davitt, the League received a good deal of aid from other sources besides those in itself, did it not?

Yes, the auxiliary organisations did much important work. Of these, that in this country, by its organisation, its sympathy, and its material aid, made the fight possible. In money, over 500,000 dollars have come from the American National Land League. The effect upon the landlords was an important one. They found that they not only had to fight the Irish in Ireland, but the greater Ireland in America as well. Besides the money

sent from here, hundreds of thousands of American and Irish-American papers have found their way into Ireland, and have done their part in educating the people there to democratic ideas. In spite of the enormous amount of aid sent from this country, no attempt has been made to run the Irish organisation from here. The most perfect confidence in the Irish executive seems to have been felt, although a strong desire that no back down should be made from the original stand taken has been often expressed. One reason of the success of the Land League in this country, and of the large amounts of money subscribed, has been this:—For years the Irish in this country have been sending money to those left behind in Ireland, which money has gone to pay the rent. The League asks them to continue a part of their subscriptions to put an end to the rent and the necessity for aid for ever. It is no wonder, then, that the Irish in this country should feel so much in favour of the League. Less money is asked to destroy landlordism than was formerly demanded to support it.

There were auxiliary organisations in England and Scotland, were there not?

The Land League of Great Britain is an organisation of great strength. It has branches in London, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, Bristol, Nottingham—in fact, the list of places would be merely a list of the principal towns and cities in England and Scotland. I do not think you have any idea of the extent to which the organisation has been pushed. There is a strong Land League organisation in Australia, and some branches in New Zealand, and wherever there are Irishmen there are branches of the League. If there were any Irishmen at the North Pole there would, undoubtedly, be a Polar branch. While speaking of Scotland, I must not forget to mention the fact that one of the oldest Irish land reformers now living, John Ferguson, of Glasgow, has for years kept the land question before the Scotch people. Another fact, which is significant, is, that in the Land League of Great Britain there are many English and Scotch members, and their support of the principles involved is as hearty and as sincere as that of any Irishman living. The Highlanders of the Western Isles and of the North of Scotland are now stirring for themselves.

The strength and perfect organisation of the Land League having been proved, and the two attempts at suppression under the law having failed, the Government of Mr Gladstone declared

open war. This much you have said. What form did that war take?

Mr Forster brought forward, on the part of the Government, the famous, or rather infamous, Coercion Act or Repression Bill—it was called by both names. He stated that it was absolutely necessary for the protection of life and property in Ireland, and he assured the House of Commons that it was not aimed at the Land League, as long as that organisation remained a constitutional body. The people whom Mr Forster wished to restrain were, to use his own words, “The village tyrants and dissolute ruffians.” In other words, as Mr Forster presented the bill to the House, it became a measure to suppress outrage in Ireland. The Irish members fought the measure as strongly as they knew how, and fought it clause by clause—I might almost say line by line. They saw that the bill gave the Government unlimited power, and removed all the restraints upon its exercise. Some English and Scotch members, seduced by Mr Forster’s promises, helped to pass the bill, and Ireland was at once subjected to the orders of an irresponsible lot of men in Dublin Castle. Almost the first act of the Government showed how much reliance could be placed on the promises of Mr Forster. The local leaders of the Land League, the most influential men in each place, were arrested. Mr Brönnan was placed in jail, and rapidly following him came Mr Parnell, Mr Dillon, Dr Kenny, and Dr Cardiff, of Wexford. I can save time by saying that all men who were identified with the Land League movement were placed in custody—in order to show to the world, I suppose, what a truthful gentleman and honourable man the Government had in the Ministry, in the person of the Right Hon. Mr Forster. The influence of the best men in each community being removed, outrages began to be very common. For the first time, in many years, “Captain Moonlight” made his appearance. “Captain Moonlight” is the name given in Ireland to the bands of men who parade the country at night and inflict personal injury upon those whom they consider worthy of vengeance. For example, if a tenant-farmer be evicted, and a “care-taker” be placed in possession of the farm, “Captain Moonlight” and his men come at night, and, after surrounding the house, either kill the man or wound him by shooting him in the legs. Outrages increased with fearful rapidity; landlords and agents were shot, and ruffianism became rampant in the land. This may be directly traced to the Coercion Bill, because the restraints of public opinion, as represented by the best men in each community,

being removed, there was nothing to deter the wilder sort. The arrests went on, but among them Mr Forster failed to make any of men who had committed crimes. The one sin to be punished was connection with the Land League. The state of things in Ireland was fearful, and the whole country was rapidly becoming exasperated, while England began to be ashamed. It was proved that notes were sent to prominent landlords from the Castle, asking them whom they wished arrested. As might be supposed, they wanted those who refused to pay rent taken, and a refusal was therefore equivalent to a crime, as far as results went. The landlords freely threatened the tenants with arrest if they refused to pay. Things went on in this way until Mr Parnell and the people in jail with him became very much alarmed.

*The "No Rent" Manifesto.*

Thinking that something must be done, Mr Parnell and the executive of the League issued the "No Rent" manifesto. While it was not obeyed as generally as had been hoped, it struck terror into the hearts of the landlords, and seriously alarmed the Government.

Did you think that the issuance of that manifesto was a wise thing to do?

My signature was attached to it without my knowledge, as I was at that time in Portland. Mr Brennan assumed that I would approve of it had it been possible for him to communicate with me. The first I heard of it was three months after it had been issued. While I admit its great success as far as results were concerned, I think that it dulled a weapon which could have been used to give the final blow to landlordism in Ireland. Had the League waited until two or three hundred thousand tenant-farmers were ready to obey it, it would have involved the eviction of a million of people. That would have been a measure which the Government could not have faced, and the result would have been the downfall of the system of landlordism. Still, I admit the temptation to make use of it, and I believe that it was the increase of outrages that drove Mr Parnell to it. The results were immediate. The landlords offered the largest possible reduction of rents, and Mr Gladstone offered to release the suspects and bring forward the Arrears Bill. This is a bill to aid the tenant-farmers of Ireland. It requires the tenants to show that they are unable to pay the arrears of rent. When this is done, and the tenants are able to pay one year's rent, the Government will agree to pay the arrears for another year. All



that remained unpaid then will be wiped out. This bill, if passed, will give some relief to large numbers of tenant-farmers—and of course to the landlords also—although there will be a large number of farmers who will be unable to take advantage of its provisions, owing to the fact that they are unable to find the year's rent necessary. Take, for example, those tenants in Carraroe, of whom I have spoken already. How could they find a year's rent? While the bill is passing through the House of Commons, Mr Parnell will, of course, endeavour to have it amended in order to take in this class. The release of the political prisoners and the bringing forward of the Arrears Bill by Mr Gladstone on the one hand, and the withdrawal of the "No Rent" manifesto by Mr Parnell on the other, constituted the so-called Kilmainham treaty. While it is true that all the League was fighting for had not been accomplished, the Government having accepted Mr Parnell's ideas, it had become merely a matter of time before the whole scheme would have been successful. It seemed as though after so many long years Ireland could at last see a practical triumph, when an event suddenly took place which was the heaviest blow at the League which had been struck. Chronologically speaking, we have now arrived at the assassination in Phoenix Park of Lord Frederick Cavendish and Mr Burke, the Chief Secretary and Under Secretary for Ireland.

#### *The Ladies' Land League.*

Up to this time, Mr Davitt, we have gone over the causes which led to the Land League movement, the steps taken at first to set it in motion, the election of 1880, the Parliamentary tactics of the League, the State trials and their failure, the Repression Act of Mr Forster, and its abandonment by the Government. We have now reached the time in the history of the movement when the assassination of Lord Frederick Cavendish and Mr Burke took place in the Phoenix Park. Before discussing that, I should be glad if you would tell me something about the Ladies' Land League.

The Ladies' Land League was started in this country first by Miss Fanny Parnell. I liked the idea so much that when I went to Ireland I talked it over with Mr Parnell and some of the others, and a meeting was called to discuss it. In order to attend that meeting Miss Anna Parnell came to Dublin, and the result was that the Ladies' Land League was organised. This was done the day before my arrest, and I laughed as I journeyed to Portland when I thought of what a power had been raised up

for Mr Forster to grapple with. There were two objects in view when this branch of the League was established. First, it would be the medium for all kinds of charity, would support the evicted tenants, and relieve all cases of distress; and, second, it would keep up a semblance of organisation during the attempted repression which I saw was coming. I did not believe that the English Government would sit down quietly under the failure of the State trials, and I wanted to have some power in existence which could defy them. The Ladies' Land League was thoroughly successful in both objects, and to them is due the credit of saving the Land League, and banishing Mr Forster from Ireland. The officers of the Ladies' Land League are:—President, Mrs Dean, the aunt of John Dillon; treasurers, Mrs Maloney and Miss O'Leary; secretaries, Miss Anna Parnell, Miss Lynch, and Miss Stritch. This forms the executive. There is a corps of organisers, among whom are Mrs Moore, an American; Miss Reynolds, Miss O'Connor, the sister of T. P. O'Connor, and Miss Yates. There is a reserve of twenty-one ladies who are prepared to take the place of any of the principal organisers who are in prison. They have elaborated the most perfect system that can be imagined. They have an enormous book which they call the "Book of Kells," after an ancient manuscript history of Ireland. This is a register containing information about all parts of Ireland as collected by the branches and collated in the central office. In it there is a record of every estate, the number of tenants, rents paid, the Government valuation, the spirit and financial condition of the people, the standing of the people towards the Land League, the number of people who have paid rent, the number of evictions which have taken place and the number pending, the character of the landlord, of the agent, if there be one, and of the constabulary. In fact, it would be excessively difficult to say what is not in that book. Every week reports come in from every part of Ireland, which are at once condensed and put into this book. This is the chief work in the central office.

### *The Work of Relief.*

When a notice is received from a branch of a threatened eviction the work outside begins. One of the ladies goes down to the place provided with money for assistance. If possible, a wooden house is sent from Dublin and erected somewhere in the neighbourhood, for the tenants to move into at once, the object being that as soon as they are turned out of one place they go

into another. If the people desire to fight the landlords upon any legal grievance they may have, or if they wish to prosecute the evicting officers for damage to stock or furniture, in either event the Ladies' Land League furnishes the necessary money, and instructs its solicitors to manage the case. The Ladies' Land League has organised branches in every county in Ireland, and these branches supply information and collect funds. An exceedingly important work has recently been begun by Miss Parnell and Miss Lynch. They have organised clubs of boys, calling the clubs after some prominent member of the organisation. These clubs meet once a week and have the history of Ireland read to them. You do not, perhaps, see the importance of this. But the English Government has discouraged the teaching of Irish history in the schools and colleges to that extent that few young Irishmen know much about it. Now, the Ladies' Land League has resolved that this state of things shall not continue, and that the next generation of Irishmen shall know something about their own country. This work has spread into England, and is now being carried on in London (by Mrs A. M. Sullivan), Liverpool, Manchester, Glasgow, and other places. The executive of the Ladies' Land League meets once a week, and the reports prepared by it reach the public through the public press.

In order to give you some idea of what this charitable work has amounted to, I have here a condensed report of the number of families evicted in the various counties. The report was prepared by Miss Parnell, and is as follows:—

Antrim, ...	...	...	...	8	Leitrim, ...	...	...	...	478
Armagh, ...	...	...	...	56	Longford, ...	...	...	...	303
Cavan, ...	...	...	...	159	Louth, ...	...	...	...	8
Carlow, ...	...	...	...	29	Mayo, ...	...	...	...	541
Clare, ...	...	...	...	102	Meath, ...	...	...	...	33
Cork, ...	...	...	...	107	Monaghan, ...	...	...	...	59
Down, ...	...	...	...	16	Limerick, ...	...	...	...	132
Donegal, ...	...	...	...	219	Queen's County, ...	...	...	...	45
Dublin, ...	...	...	...	12	Roscommon, ...	...	...	...	122
Fermanagh, ...	...	...	...	21	Sligo, ...	...	...	...	58
Galway, ...	...	...	...	392	Tipperary, ...	...	...	...	98
Kerry, ...	...	...	...	236	Tyrone, ...	...	...	...	115
Kilkenny, ...	...	...	...	39	Waterford, ...	...	...	...	31
Kildare, ...	...	...	...	8	Westmeath, ...	...	...	...	51
King's County, ...	...	...	...	40	Wexford, ...	...	...	...	46
Londonderry, ...	...	...	...	19	Wicklow, ...	...	...	...	25
Total, ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3688

*The Ladies' Political Work.*

According to Miss Parnell, these families each averaged in number five and a fraction ; but as the officially reported number of persons evicted is greater than these figures show, I imagine that all the evictions were not reported to the Ladies' League. The Ladies' League furnished to evicted tenants, in various parts of Ireland, 210 houses, which, in many instances, the consignees were prevented by the police from erecting. In concluding her report, Miss Parnell gives the following account of the expenditure of the Ladies' Land League during the past twelve months :—

Evicted tenants to date, ... ..	£20,849	19	4
Families of coercion prisoners, ... ..	5,123	2	0
Families of ordinary law prisoners, ... ..	1,449	11	11
Building, ... ..	9,469	3	5
Providing for coercion prisoners and ordinary law prisoners from December 26, 1881, to date, ... ..	21,637	16	4
Ordinary law prisoners' catering from December 26, to date, ... ..	1,603	12	1
Legal costs by Ladies' Land League, ... ..	1,508	17	7
Miscellaneous grants, ... ..	187	7	0
Grants made by Land League since its suppression, ... ..	7,542	16	2
Total, ... ..	£69,372	5	10

When the leaders of the Land League were in Kilmainham, what did the Ladies' Land League do ?

They kept the organisation alive. When Mr Forster imprisoned all the leaders, the Land League was virtually suppressed. There was no head, and had it been left to itself then it would have broken up. But the Ladies' Land League stepped in. The members went about the country making speeches and urging upon the people to pay no rent. Mr Forster wrote his name high on the roll of chivalry by ordering some of them to be arrested. He placed Miss O'Connor in Mullingar jail, and imprisoned Miss Reynolds and Mrs Moore. I suppose he thought that these examples would scare the ladies. So far from doing this, it merely exasperated them. Hundreds of ladies, who had refused to join the organisation before, sent in their names, and Mr Forster was confronted with a state of things which no Government could grapple with. Five thousand ladies of Ireland were calling upon the Government to arrest them, and were preaching Land League doctrines as they were never preached before. The men were all locked up, but the women were still to the fore. When it came to arresting young ladies and locking them up in felons' cells, as was done with Miss O'Connor, the English people began to cry "Halt !" They were ashamed

of what was being done. The English newspapers found it inconvenient to chronicle in one column the arrest of a girl in Ireland, and in another the sending of Nihilist women to Siberia. But Mr Gladstone's Government had gone to that point where change was impossible, except such a change as would involve the abandonment of the whole policy. They had arrested all the men, but they could not arrest the women, because the people would not support them in any such measure. Consequently they found it necessary to retreat, and Mr Forster was forced to resign. The Land League had won the fight, and the finishing blow had been struck by the ladies of Ireland.

*Mr Forster's Character.*

As this is the point where Mr Forster's policy ends, what is your opinion of him?

Mr Forster is, or was, for his failure in Ireland has crushed him, one of the strongest men in England. When he was sent to Ireland, I believe that the selection was made solely with the idea of doing the best that could be done in the selection of a Chief Secretary for that unhappy country. When a very young man, Mr Forster had travelled in Ireland in '48, and the scenes of misery which he witnessed produced such an impression upon him that he not only was very active in the schemes of relief then proposed and carried out, but he resolved, as he said in a speech made in Ireland during the last twelve months, to do what was in his power to alleviate the condition of the Irish people. When Mr Forster came to Ireland as Chief Secretary he came as a friend. That I firmly believe. Unfortunately, long years of misrule had taught the Irish people to associate the idea of tyranny with Dublin Castle, and it is impossible for a people to change their ideas in a day. While Mr Forster was disposed to be friendly, the Irish people did not know it, or, knowing, disbelieved it. Mr Forster found that everything he did was looked upon with unfriendly eyes, and unfortunately on his side he was not a sufficiently great man to have patience to wait until his acts could win the people to him. The representatives of the landlords were there, and he fell into the hands of what is called in Ireland the "Castle ring." Being a strong man, Mr Forster was as positive for evil as for good. Once the policy of repression was stamped upon his mind it was a necessity of the man's nature that he should go to the lengths he did. Where a weaker man would have paused, frightened at the storm he had raised, Mr Forster held on, and met each attempt at

resistance with a sterner measure of repression. The fight may be compared to the contest between defensive armour and improved missiles of war. The ultimate point of the one is immovable resistance, the ultimate point of the other is irresistible force. The Government triumphed until they met the Ladies' Land League, and in it they found the immovable resistance which forced them to abandon their policy, and crushed the man to whose stern disposition that policy was due.

What is the work of the Ladies' Land League now?

Entirely charitable. When the leaders of the Land League were released, the political work was resumed by them, and the ladies contented themselves with doing that which was charitable. Politically, they had accomplished their work, and accomplished it nobly. You know, of course, that there is no Land League in Ireland now. It has been declared illegal, and its meetings have been forbidden. It exists, however, in the persons of the men who are recognised as its leaders. But the men have found that the ladies are doing their work of charity so well and so efficiently that there is no desire on their part to relieve them of it. The important work of educating the boys will go on, of course, and it will result in a generation of Irishmen who will know something about Ireland.

### *The Great Crime.*

We have at last cleared the way for the discussion of the assassination in Phoenix Park.

Prior to the assassination, when the news of the release of the suspects and the promised introduction of the Arrears Bill reached the people of Ireland, there was the wildest rejoicing throughout the land. Bonfires were lit upon every hill, the people assembled in crowds and paraded, brass bands played, and the whole race were in a fever of joy. I was released from Portland on the 6th of May, 1882, and when I reached the Westminster Hotel I found a crowd of friends who had assembled to meet me. Speeches were made, congratulations offered, and we were generally in a state of the utmost delight. We realised that we had won the long fight, and that the end could not be far off when we might have all we hoped for. In England the feeling over the change of policy by the Government was one of amazement on the part of the majority and indignation among the landlord class. Accusations were freely made that Mr Gladstone had surrendered to Mr Parnell. In Ireland the delight over the release of the suspects and the Arrears Bill

was even exceeded by that felt over the dismissal of Mr Forster. Suddenly the news broke upon us of the assassination. It came on Saturday night late, and at first we believed it to be a hoax got up by the landlords out of spite. We were not left long in doubt, however, for the confirmation followed hard upon the first rumour. The effect upon the leaders of the Land League was disastrous. More than one of them spoke of resigning and giving up the fight. While I realised the fearful blow that had been struck against the League, I was appalled at the thought of what the resignation of the leaders meant. I pointed out to Mr Parnell, that if the news of the resignations of the leaders reached Ireland, the moral restraint exercised by the League for so long would be at once removed, and that the scenes which would ensue with a half-maddened people, driven wild by the sudden withdrawal of the hope so strongly excited, would be calculated to bring on a war of extermination. At last Mr Parnell and those who had lost heart, were convinced that it was their duty, more than ever, to go on. A manifesto was issued disowning the crime, and calling upon the people of Ireland to aid in the discovery of the murderers by refusing them shelter.

*The Action in America.*

Not only was the manifesto issued, but in the speeches made, and in the newspapers identified with the League, was the crime denounced. The news reached this side of the water, and with it came the manifesto, which was cabled to the principal papers and to the Land League executive. The branches in Boston and San Francisco at once offered rewards for the discovery of the criminals; and the news that they had done so, produced, in connection with the manifesto, the best effect upon English public opinion. To-day the majority of the people of England do not believe that the League is responsible for this crime.

Who do you suppose is responsible?

In order to answer that question, it is necessary to briefly rehearse the facts of the assassination. It took place in the central roadway in the Phoenix Park. This roadway is one of the principal streets or roads through the park, and runs from Kingsbridge to the Chief Secretary's Lodge. Three hundred yards from the gate there is a statue of Lord Gough. One hundred and fifty yards further on, just opposite the Vice-regal Lodge, the assassination took place. At the time the Lord Lieutenant, Lord Spencer, was looking out, and saw what he supposed was a scuffle between roughs. Lord Spencer and Lord Frederick Cavendish had just left the city after the public reception to Lord Spencer. Mr Burke was walking up the pathway towards his residence, when he was overtaken by Lord Frederick Cavendish, who left his car and joined him. Then the assassination took place. The two men were set upon by four others and stabbed to death. The daggers used, according to the police theory, were long and narrow, and made in such a way as to be held between the fingers—the second and third. Mr Burke was almost cut to pieces, and Lord Frederick Cavendish received two wounds, either one of which would have been fatal, in the region of the heart. Then the murderers escaped. Some people believed that they got into a car and drove off, others that they walked away. At any rate, they disappeared. To give you some idea of the inefficiency of the police under Castle rule, there were standing at the door of the Viceregal Lodge, when the news of the murder came, two mounted policemen, yet they were not sent off at once, as they should have been, by the officials—a piece of official negligence which is so extraordinary as to almost pass belief. It is, I suppose, scarcely necessary

for me to add, that up to the present time the murderers have not been discovered. Now as to who committed the crime. There are four theories for it—the Land League, the Fenians, the Continental Socialists, and the Emergency men. Taking them in the order named, the Land League had everything to lose, and nothing to gain, by the crime. The fact cannot be too strongly insisted upon that, when Mr Gladstone gave in, releasing the suspects, and bringing forward the Arrears Bill, he adopted the theory of the Land League. Every one in England and Ireland so understood it. In Ireland, especially, the people regarded the change as a triumph. The whole people were jubilant over the alteration in affairs. Discontent had vanished, and the people looked upon the fight as won. Under these conditions, what object was there to be gained by the assassination? But, more than this, the whole policy of the League had been against outrage of every kind, and the people had been trained to consider it as the worst thing for Ireland that could happen. When Mr Forster went through the country making speeches, he, the one most hated man in Ireland, the man who was looked upon as the incarnation of Dublin Castle and landlordism, was not attacked. Is it, then, conceivable that the members of the League would attack a man who represented victory to them—who had come to Ireland as the first fruits of a policy which they believed was going to result in all they hoped for? I say it is not conceivable—that such a proposition is too wildly absurd to be worthy of a moment's thought. The second theory charges the crime upon the Fenians. At this point I wish to allude to a fact, which is to me one of great significance. The weapons used were weapons which are unknown in the history of Irish crime. There is not one instance, in the long list of outrages in Ireland, where the dagger was used. The shot-gun and the stick have always been the weapons employed, and the knife or dagger has been unknown. Had the perpetrators of the crime been Irishmen, they might have feared to employ the gun or revolver because of the attention they would attract; but in that case they would have used bludgeons. Now for the Fenian theory, which is the one adopted by the English Government, and upon which rests the Coercion Bill, or rather which is the excuse for the Coercion Bill. I personally saw some of the principal leaders, and each one told me that the assassination had injured the Fenians as much as it had the Land League. John O'Leary, of Paris, publicly disclaimed all connection with the deed for himself and his society; and as he spoke, so have all the leaders I have seen spoken.

But O'Donovan Rossa in this country has stated that he knows who did it, and that it was done by the organisation to which he belongs?

O'Donovan Rossa never knew anything about the assassination before it took place. It was as much of a surprise to him as it was to everyone else, and he has not the slightest or most remote idea of who did it. If he had, he could no more keep the knowledge to himself than a hen with one chick can help clucking. That he should say he does is not wonderful. He has been feeding the readers of his paper for so long upon paper exploits that he is forced to grab at a *bona fide* crime whenever he gets a chance. For all that, he is doing an enormous amount of harm to Ireland.

What is it which makes you connect the third set of people mentioned—the Continental Socialists—with the crime? What could they gain by committing it?

This theory is new, and I give it, of course, for what it is worth. My first impressions in this connection were formed when I heard of the weapon used. I am familiar with the history of Socialism; and I know



that the dagger has always been the weapon of the Continental secret societies—the Carbonari, for example. An English gentleman told me that about six months ago he was in Paris, and was talking to a member of the French Chamber, who is thoroughly acquainted with the secret societies upon the Continent. This Frenchman said that he had learned that the secret Socialistic societies upon the Continent were anxious to establish some connection between themselves and the Irish agrarian movement, but that they were very anxious that the agitation in Ireland should not be settled upon the constitutional lines laid down by the Land League, preferring a development of it into something more like pure Socialism. The Frenchman declared that, in his opinion, something would happen in Ireland before long which would astonish the world. Taking this in connection with the fact that the *Freiheit*, the German Socialistic organ in London, openly commended the act and extolled the men who did it—for which, by-the-by, it was suspended, and its registered printer thrown into prison—it seems to me there is enough to warrant my putting forward this theory as one of the four possible theories accounting for the crime.

#### *The Fourth Theory.*

Who are the Emergency men you mentioned?

They are the persons employed by the landlord's committee to fight the League. Some of them are men who would hesitate at nothing to injure the League, and to whom the idea of such a scheme would not be particularly appalling. The supposition that the crime was committed by Emergency men involves the idea that it was prompted by the landlords. Now, at this point, I wish to state distinctly, first, that I do not believe the great body of the landlords would be guilty of such a crime; second, that I do believe there are men among them who would not hesitate for one moment in committing it if they thought they would thereby defeat and ruin the League. The idea that the crime was committed by the Emergency men is one general throughout Ireland. It is based upon the following train of reasoning:—Before a great crime can be committed there must be some equally great motive. In order to find out who committed a crime, find out who will be benefited by it. When men who have committed a crime suddenly escape, find out who has sufficient power to make that escape possible, and you will not be far away from those who aided it. Now to apply all. It can scarcely be denied that the blows aimed at Lord Frederick Cavendish were not aimed at him personally. As far as can be ascertained, his life was a blameless one, and no one had any personal interest in taking it away. He was killed because he was the Chief Secretary for Ireland under the new conciliation policy. To the Irish he represented victory and to the landlords defeat. In the past Mr Burke had represented to the Irish Dublin Castle rule. But when he was killed he represented that rule defeated after the long fight. The Irish people had no object to gain, no motive to prompt them to such a crime. The landlords knew that the crime, if committed, would put an end to the conciliation policy, for a while at any rate, and would bring about sterner measures of repression than any yet seen. Who had a motive in this case—the landlords or the people? Who were to be benefited by the result? For the Irish the assassination turned their victory into defeat; for the landlords it brought back that coercion which is their only hope. Understand me; the good they got out of it is more apparent than real. There is a return to the coercion policy, but no coercion can kill the thirst of the Irish people for liberty, and this measure will fail as have its

predecessors. But the landlords believe in coercion, and they believe that by coercion they will win. The Irish do not believe that coercion can make them lose in the long run, but they know by bitter experience the misery it brings with it. Did the Irish or the landlords believe they would benefit by the deed? The landlords of Ireland, through the machinery of the Castle, control the police. They have what the people have not—plenty of money. They could obtain an accurate knowledge of the proposed movements of Lord Frederick Cavendish. Who, then, could have aided in the escape of the murderers as effectively as the men who could not only give all the information needed, but could furnish the money and control the police? Answer these questions for yourself. Look over the four classes and say who had the motive and who would benefit by the crime. I am not afraid to leave the answer to any man of common sense.

### *The Coercion Bill.*

Did not the assassination change the whole policy of the Government and bring out the present Coercion Act?

Yes. The first and natural cry of vengeance which arose from the whole English people was taken by Mr Gladstone as the expression of a willingness to support the Government in the sternest measures of repression. So this bill was brought forward. It was not a new one. When Mr Forster began his policy of repression for Ireland he prepared two bills—that which was adopted and the one which is now in the House of Lords. There was a division of opinion in the Cabinet as to which should be adopted, and the milder of the two was finally chosen. This bill, then, was drawn with the same object as the former one, and I have already shown that, while the former was ostensibly aimed at those who committed outrage and murder, it was in fact directed at the Land League. The same pretext as before is now put forward by the Government, when they bring out the bill which was originally prepared to aid Mr Forster in his project of stamping the League out of existence. It is not difficult to arrive at the conclusion that this bill will be used as was the former, and that secret societies will be little interfered with as long as there is a Land Leaguer left to arrest.

What is this Coercion Act?

Since the Legislative Union in 1800, there have been fifty-one Coercion Acts. Think of that for a moment! Counting this one, fifty-two Coercion Acts in eighty-two years. This is the record of England's rule in Ireland. This present one embraces all of the objectionable features of the preceding fifty-one. It is exceedingly difficult for you, in this country, to realise the result of this law. Under it the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland can, whenever he sees fit to do so, suppress all public meetings of any kind; suspend newspapers; arrest any man arbitrarily, and hold him without trial, for the habeas corpus is suspended in Ireland now. He can order that there be no more jury trials, and can constitute any three judges a court to determine the law and the fact. The court so constituted can try and condemn for any of certain offences charged. He can invest magistrates with summary powers to try criminal or political charges. It is not possible that, when all of the barriers which exist between justice and tyranny are removed, all the safeguards which have been erected to insure the administering of justice to the accused, there should not be cases occurring of the unjust imprisonment of innocent men. Such cases will create excitement, will exasperate the people. This is sure to happen. More than that, the Coercion Bill gives the right of search, at all times, to

the police. The people are absolutely in the power of the magistrates and the constabulary. I cannot tell you in words what this means, but every man who recollects the scenes which have taken place in Ireland in the past, will have a fair idea of what may take place there in the future. Recollect that this absolute power is placed by the Government in the hands of men who are intensely inimical to the people. Upon the landlord magistrates there is no check. How will this power be exercised? It would not be safe to give such power to the judges in this country, where there is no war between classes, because the mere possession of it is apt to bring about its abuse. Is it, then, safe to place it in the hands of magistrates avowedly hostile to the people? Human nature is the same all the world over, and the result of the Coercion Bill can only be too easily foreseen.

*What the Bill Means.*

Let me give you one instance of how it may be used. Suppose that you were a young man living in Ireland and recently married. Suppose that a body of constabulary, headed by a sergeant, were to come to your house and break into the room where your wife and yourself were asleep. Half a dozen men would wake you up, and, after making your wife and yourself get up, would search the room for arms. How would you feel when those men left, as you saw your wife weeping with shame? The Government says that the Coercion Bill is aimed at the secret societies. Mr Forster told the same lie about the first, so that the cry has not even the poor merit of originality. But let that pass. Now, I hold that if history teaches one thing more than another, it is that no Government ever was or ever will be able to grapple with secret societies by any enactment. This is true in the very nature of things. No Government can find out if a man belongs to a secret society except by employing informers, and the testimony of informers is rarely worth listening to. Take my own case. I was convicted upon the testimony of an informer of an offence which I had not been guilty of. I received the penalty and have served out the greater part of it. Now, the story that man told about me was absolutely untrue, yet for all that, sentence was passed. As it happened to me, so it will happen to other men. Should the Government attempt to suppress secret societies in Ireland, the men who are imprisoned will probably be, in the majority of cases, innocent men. This will merely exasperate the people and strengthen the societies themselves. The constitutional movement of the Land League once swept away, the Government and the secret societies will have the field to themselves.

*What is Mr Gladstone's Land Act?*

The Land Act establishes what are called Land Courts for Ireland. If the landlord or tenant should become dissatisfied with the rent, either can appeal to the nearest Land Court. The court has the land valued by professional valuers, and upon this valuation the rent is fixed, to continue at that figure for fifteen years. The constitution of these courts is, of course, of great importance. They are made up of lawyers and land agents, the two classes which constitute the backbone of the system of landlordism, and their sympathy is far more with the landlords than with the tenants. The institution of Land Courts, in that it recognises the fact that there is law to be got for the tenant, is an advance, although the system itself is a very imperfect one. Frequently the Land Courts have placed the rents at far too high figures.

Mr Gladstone wants Ireland to give a trial to his second attempt to settle the Irish land question. The people of Ireland will refuse to give

any further trial to Irish landlordism. Instead of having grappled with this festering social cancer in a courageous and effective manner, which his previous failure to cure the evil would reasonably warrant, he has proceeded upon the lines of his former mistake, and produced another experimental measure of reform by which landlord and tenant, instead of being legally divorced, are both turned over into the hands of the lawyers, and the country invited to place all its prospects of peace and prosperity in the universal litigation of the Land Courts! If Mr Gladstone persists in dealing only with the Irish social problem as intensified by the Land League agitation, instead of grappling with it as Irish land reformers propose—that is, in connection with a train of retrospective ruin, present discontent, and the certainty of the system continuing to move in a circle of reproductive wrong—he will bequeath the settlement of the Irish land war to the future, and leave the primary cause of Irish poverty, disaffection, and crime to the country he is anxious should look to him as a friend.

As the Land Act, when stripped of verbiage, is but the extension of the Ulster Custom over the whole of Ireland, the people of Ulster complain that they get nothing from the legislation which has been passed. This, however, reflects upon the Government rather than upon the League, because the League dislikes the Land Act as much as anyone can.

Where was the idea of peasant proprietary first broached in connection with Ireland?

Peasant proprietary was tried in France after the French Revolution. From there it spread to Belgium and Germany, and English writers began to suggest that in it would be found the true solution of the Irish question. Among these writers were John Stuart Mill and Kay. When the Land League was formed in October, 1879, peasant proprietary for Ireland was adopted as its Parliamentary programme. It must be remembered that there have been two reforms going on in connection with the Land League, the destructive and the constructive. The former, which had for its object the abolition of landlordism, has been conducted by Mr Brennan, Mr Kettle, Mr Egan, and myself. Its operations have been confined to Ireland, and its leaders have never pronounced for any system to be adopted. The constructive reform has been under the management of Mr Parnell and the Parliamentary representatives of the League. Its object has been the substitution of peasant proprietary for landlordism. This division of the work has not brought with it anything like dissension. None of the leaders in Ireland have ever attempted to interfere with the work of Mr Parnell in Parliament, nor have Mr Parnell and the Irish members attempted to interfere with the work in Ireland. The Parliamentary programme has never been subscribed to by either Mr Brennan or myself, and when it was put out as the programme prior to the election of 1880 neither of us signed it.

#### *Mr Parnell's Plans.*

What is peasant proprietary?

It is a scheme to make the tenant-farmers the owners in fee simple of the lots of land they cultivate. If it should be adopted the Government would have to advance the purchase money. The working of the Bright clauses of the Land Act of 1870 proved this beyond a question. They provided that if any tenant-farmer could advance one-third of the purchase money for his farm the Board of Works should advance the remaining two-thirds, to be paid back by the tenant in moderate yearly instalments. The very small number of men who have been able to take advantage of this

has shown conclusively that any scheme which depends upon the tenants making any advances must be a failure, for the simple reason that they, as a rule, have no money. Any scheme, then, for the purchase of the property of the landlords in Ireland must contain a provision for the advance of the whole money by the Government. The plan of peasant proprietary is this: That the Government shall fix upon the purchase money to be paid, and shall make some satisfactory arrangement with the landlords for its payment; that upon this purchase money a fair rent shall be fixed, and that two per cent. interest on the purchase money be added—the sum to be the rent paid by the tenant farmer for about fifty years, at the expiration of which time he will become the owner in fee simple of the land. Now, it is perfectly clear that the rent in such case will be determined by the amount of the purchase money. The English writers speak of thirty-five years' purchase—that is, that the purchase money shall be thirty-five times the amount of the present rental. Suppose that the efforts of the Land League members of Parliament are sufficient to reduce this by ten, making it twenty-five years' purchase. Say that the rental of Ireland before the Land League excitement was £15,000,000, and say that the efforts of the League have reduced this to £12,000,000. Now, twenty-five years' purchase would make the sum to be paid £300,000,000. Two per cent. upon this, £6,000,000, which, added to the rental, would make the total rental £18,000,000, or £3,000,000 more than it was before the Land League agitation began. It is a very serious question if the tenants of Ireland could pay this sum. Granting, however, that they could do so—and it must be remembered that the fixity of tenure brought about by such a plan would stimulate every man to do his best, and would remove the paralysing effect of the ever present fear of eviction—the system has many advantages. It is perfectly feasible, as has been proved by the experience of other countries, particularly France and Belgium. It would be an enormous advance upon the system of landlordism—how great, it would be difficult to say. It would be a great economic advance, for there would be increased production, better cultivation, a better tenant-farmer class. It would check emigration and keep a great part of the capital in the country. The increased production would stimulate manufactures and commerce. These results have come from it in other countries, therefore we have a right to suppose they would be seen in Ireland. The fact, too, that the impetus given to the work of the tenant-farmer in Ireland by such a scheme would be equivalent to the difficulties under which he has laboured—action and reaction being equal, or nearly so, in social movements—must not be lost sight of, because it warrants us in supposing that the beneficial results of peasant proprietary would be even greater in Ireland than they have been in other countries.

#### *An Insufficient Measure.*

Would peasant proprietary be a final settlement of the question?

Mr Parnell thinks it would, and there are many wise men in and out of the League who agree with him. There are in Ireland, as everywhere else, many classes in the community. These, at present, can be roughly divided into the landlords, the tenants, and the labourers. As the scheme of the League proposes as a condition the elimination of the class of landlords, there remain to be considered the two latter classes. That peasant proprietary would enormously benefit, supposing the tenants able to pay the rent demanded, the first of these classes, there can be no doubt. But I must confess myself unable to see where the advantage to

the other class, the labourers, comes in. It is true that if there were warranty for the supposition that the tenant-farmer, when his condition is made better and he has more money, would deal more justly with the labourer, then the advantage to the labourer would become apparent. Unfortunately, neither in theory nor experience can we find such warranty. In theory, human nature being the same in all classes, we are forced to reason that if the landlords, having the tenants in their power, treat them unjustly, the tenants, when they have the labourers in their power, will deal with them in the same way. It would be perfectly competent reasoning, were the reverse of this true, to assume that if the condition of landlords were made better, and they were given more money, they would treat their tenants better. But experience itself is against this theory. It is a known fact in Ireland that there are no landlords so grasping as are the middlemen, the men who rent large estates or farms and parcel them out to tenants under them. The experience of Belgium and France is that the condition of the labourers under the tenant-farmers is to the last degree deplorable. Now, something must be done in this movement for the labouring class. I have no more love for one class of Irishmen than I have for another, and I consider that all alike should share in the benefits to be derived from the abolition of landlordism. It is the fact that landlordism presses with equal severity upon all the people that constitutes the reason why it must be abolished. No change can or should take place without a reason, and for a great change there must be a great reason. But if you diminish the strength of the reason you at once diminish the necessity which exists for the change. If, then, the reason for the abolition of landlordism in Ireland is the fact that the system oppresses all classes save that of landlords, unless you can show that the change will benefit these classes, you cannot logically demand that the change be made. I am anxious to place it beyond the power of any one class to deal unjustly with any other. The Land League started out with the declaration that the land of Ireland should not belong to any one class. How, then, can it consistently transfer the ownership from one class to another? I am not wedded to terms, and I care little what a thing is called, providing I get the thing itself. If it can be shown that peasant proprietary benefits all alike, and that it is not class legislation, I am perfectly willing to give my adherence to it. If it cannot—and as yet this has not been shown—I shall remain an advocate of what I believe is the true system for Ireland—the nationalisation of the land.

#### *The Nationalisation of the Land.*

There is probably no one thing in connection with this question, Mr Davitt, which is so little understood in this country as this nationalisation of the land. Many people suppose it to be simply Communism under a new name. As it is so little understood, I should be glad if you would define what you mean by it as fully as possible.

Let me premise my remarks by saying that the charge of Communism made against it is one which I do not myself understand. If by Communism is meant the ownership of all the land by all men, then nationalisation of the land is Communism. But if by Communism is meant that all men have an equal and common right to the enjoyment of the benefits to be derived from a particular piece of land, then there is no Communism in the nationalisation of the land. It is always important to clearly define what terms mean. I am not afraid of ideas, and much less of words, but I am anxious, in order that others may understand what

the ideas are that I am trying to convey, to have a clear definition of those words. Now, to consider the proposition of the nationalisation of the land. In the first place, I hold that it is impossible to conceive of a title to land vesting in an individual. How could he get it, and who could give it to him? Who was the first owner of any piece of land and from whom did he get his title? The first owner took the land—"pre-empted" it, as they would say in the West. Before he took possession it did not belong to him; how, then, could the act of taking possession make it his? In order to acquire a title to value a man must either create that value or purchase it in some way from the person who did create it. Now, what man created the land? Who acquired title in the first place, and who could transfer it? The rights of the first man who pre-empted a piece of land were the same as those of all men. He had, in common with all his tribe, the right to the use of that land. The people of a country, properly speaking, own the country; all are equally entitled to the use of the land of that country, just exactly as they are entitled to the air to breathe or the water to drink. They created none of these, and their right to them inheres in virtue of the fact that they are human beings born in that country. There is a radical difference, however, existing between the method of using the land and the air. From the latter we derive benefit at once and without any creative power being applied by us. From the former we can derive little benefit unless we perform some act. The air is of value to us without any action of ours; the land can only be made of value when some action is performed. With land, then, we can create a value, and that created value is our property. Let us call that created value improvement. Land represents two things—the land itself, the common property of the race living in the country; and the created improvement, the individual property of the person who created it. The land itself cannot be transferred, because the occupant has no title; but the improvement can, because the owner has a title to give. But while the occupant of land cannot transfer that which he does not own, he can transfer the right of occupancy. He who makes two blades of grass to grow where but one grew before has the absolute ownership of the second which came into existence through his effort, and the right to transfer to another the privilege of continuing the operation. It would be wrong to say that the first man who took a piece of land to cultivate had not the power of transferring the right of occupancy, because he alone of all the others thought it worth while to improve that piece of land.

#### *Rights of Property.*

The improvements made by him are absolutely his, because he created them; the title to the occupancy is his also, so long as it does not interfere with the title of all his fellows to the land itself. To return to the illustration. The second blade of grass is his for the reasons stated; the first belongs to him in common with all the people living in the country. Now, as all the people in the country are represented by the State, the first blade may be said to be the property of the State; or, to drop the illustration, the land belongs to the State as a trustee for the people. The right of others besides the occupants to the benefits which are the natural results of the existence of the land must be maintained if justice is to be done.

But there is another thing. The value of the right of occupancy of land arises from and is maintained by the aggregation of population and the exercise of industry in a community. The value thus imparted and maintained belongs to that community, and cannot be alienated or appropriated

without injustice to that community. The truth of this is self-evident. The value of the occupancy of a lot of land in the midst of an uninhabited plain, such as the Western prairies used to be, is but small; whereas the value of that occupancy in the immediate neighbourhood of such a city as New York is great. Why? Because the aggregation of population gives an increased value to the benefits to be derived from that land. It is, therefore, right that as this population creates this value it should share in the good to be derived from such value—in other words, should have a portion of the value. Its right to this share or portion is the same as that of the occupant of the land to the improvement created by him.

The object of a people when they band themselves together into a nation and create a government is protection for civil and personal rights. Certain benefits are recognised as coming from the institution of government, and for these benefits the people are willing to make the sacrifices necessary to attain them. These sacrifices take the form of what we call taxation. Now, while it is undoubtedly a fact that if you could conceive of such a thing as a people having no property of any kind, that people would be willing to pay all of these taxes, it is equally true that the burden of taxation should be thrown, as far as possible, upon any property the people may have. As the only property which the people have is the land, the burden of taxation should be thrown, to a great extent, upon it. Or, to put it in another way, the men who are the occupants of the land should pay to the State, as trustee for the people, a tax for the land which they occupy, the common property of the people. This tax should also be graduated to accord with that part of the value of the occupancy which is given by the aggregation of population. The improvement created by the occupant should not be taxed any more than is any other form of created value.

#### *The Support of the Government.*

This brings me at once to the fact that taxation is dual in nature. First, taxation should be derived from the occupants of property owned by the people in order that the people may derive benefits from their property. Second, taxation should be the result of protection of rights, or should be paid for that benefit derived by the individual from the institution of government. Such payment should be in proportion to the benefit to the individual. The man with a business amounting to one hundred thousand dollars or pounds per annum should pay ten times as much as he whose business amounts to but ten. Why? Because he receives protection for ten times the amount of value.

In what way would you propose that this scheme be practically carried out? Of course it must provide for the purchase money to be paid to the landlords, and, if Ireland is to own the land, she must in some way pay this herself.

Let Ireland's annual contribution to the English exchequer be the guarantee for the compensation that shall be determined upon for the landlords. This, in round figures, is £7,000,000. A loan of, say, £150,000,000, would cover the landlords' interest at the rate of twenty years' purchase of half the annual rental—the annual interest upon which, at 3 per cent. would be £4,500,000 for a sinking fund with which to pay off the principal of the loan. This amount of compensation is subject to the same objection advanced against the terms of the peasant proprietary plan of settlement—namely, that it is smaller than the landlords will accept or the English Government will consent to agree to on their behalf. It is all I would be willing the landlords should receive—starting with



the belief that in strict justice they, or at least the majority of them, are entitled to nothing, Mr Parnell declares that he can purchase them out under a peasant proprietary scheme for £140,000,000. I am glad to hear him say so, as it is a declaration that they, in his belief, are entitled to no more. If he intends to work his scheme by aid of the Bright clauses of the Land Act of 1870 he must consent to give the landlords from twenty-five to thirty-five years' purchase for the land—which would mean £300,000,000 for the expropriation of the landlords. If he resolves upon working his scheme under the next Tory Government—which, according to Lord Salisbury and Mr W. H. Smith, will consent to advance the whole of the purchase money to the Irish farmers—he must win the landlord party itself over to my scale of compensation, which is but twenty years' purchase of half the annual rental of Ireland at the time of settlement. If he succeeds in doing this he will achieve his greatest triumph.

#### *The Amount of the Tax.*

It has been objected that the land tax that would be levied under the nationalisation of the land of Ireland would be larger than the estimate given by me in my Liverpool speech. It would, on the contrary, be smaller than 10 per cent. upon the estimated annual cereal and live-stock produce of the country. Ireland, under an Irish Chancellor of the Exchequer, would not require anything like the revenue now collected by imperial taxation. The annual expenditure by an Irish Parliament would be much less than that now demanded for imperial purposes, thereby reducing the percentage that would have to be levied upon the national property for the public business and good of the community at large.

It is again objected that in placing all taxation upon land values I would be doing an injustice to the tenant-farmer class, and exempting the rich merchants and others from contributing to the support of the State. In reference to the first of these objections, Mr Parnell has declared, in his criticism of my plan of settlement, that when a peasant proprietary would be established a tax could be levied upon land that would free the rest of the community from the fiscal obligations that now deprive them of any direct benefit from the land. In other words, he proposes to ask the tenant-farmers to purchase the fee-simple of their holdings, and then he means to tax such holdings in the interest of the non-agricultural portion of the community. Surely this is harder upon the farming class than to ask them to keep the purchase money in their pockets and pay only a tax that will be less than half their present rent, and which will give them as much security for their improvements and protection from disturbance as they can possibly expect under a peasant proprietary. In reference to the second objection, I should not object to the taxation of merchants. My object is to remove taxation from labour, and thereby lighten the burden of the mass of the people that now sinks so vast a portion of the working classes into poverty and crime. To place those taxes upon land values which now deprive the industrial classes of twenty-five per cent. of their earnings, and thereby give all men a direct benefit in their natural inheritance—the land, is the object I have in view in proposing the nationalisation of the land of Ireland as a more just, equitable, and satisfactory settlement of the land question than that of a peasant proprietary.

#### *Nationalisation and Fee Simple.*

But the nationalisation of the land, as I have called it, is really fee simple under another name, and the use of the new title is an instance of

the fact that men are governed to a large extent by words. For what rights are acquired by a fee simple title to real estate? The rights of occupancy and improvement only. The land cannot be carried away, it cannot be used up in the same way that wood can be burned. It can be occupied and improved, and the right of occupancy can be transferred or the benefits which arise from the improvement can be enjoyed. But with these two things the rights of the so-called owner cease. This fact is recognised by the laws of the United States relating to mining, under which the man who discovers a mine as the result of chance or effort thereby becomes, under certain conditions, the owner of that mine; and that in spite of the fact that there is a prior owner in fee simple of the surface under which the ledge is found. In other words, your Government recognises the fact that there are reserve rights remaining to itself as trustees for the people, even when a fee simple title of the land has been granted. I will concede that were the fee simple title granted by such a Government as that of this country, acting as the trustee for the people to the individual, there may be differences of opinion as to any further claim by the people for the benefits arising from the land. But in the case of Ireland there can be no such plea urged. The scheme of the Land League contemplates the purchase of all existing titles, and having an entirely new system introduced. In other words, the State will acquire by purchase existing titles, and as trustee for the people, who have entirely become the owners, will then have to determine in what form the occupancy of the land is to be reconveyed to the people.

But, Mr Davitt, if the nationalisation of the land gives the right of transfer of the title to occupancy and the ownership of improvements, and if, as you say, fee simple gives no more, what is the object of any change? What is to be gained by the substitution of one name for another?

Merely this. While the very fact that the State taxes on land are paid is a recognition by the people of the right of the State to draw a part of its support from the land, the statement that there vests in the individual a fee simple title causes him to look upon the land as his personal property. Now, as men pay taxes but from one motive—namely, for the protection given to them in the enjoyment of their property and personal safety—they are apt to reason that that which requires the least protection should pay the least tax, and this view is a right and just one. As of all forms of property that in land is the most difficult to injure, and, in some respects, the most difficult to steal, men naturally look on it as being that form which should pay the smallest tax. I think it can be shown that it does in fact pay the smallest tax. If, however, you abandon the name fee simple as applied to land, and call the occupancy of it by some name which will imply the ownership by the State as trustee for the people, you at once destroy the idea of ownership by the individual. The individual retains every practical right he has now—he can transfer the title to occupancy, and he can enjoy the benefits of that occupancy, supplemented by his effort, as he can at present. But the fact that his title, while perfectly secure, is one to occupancy only, is ever prominently before him, and this implies or carries with it the fact that the community have rights in the land as well as himself. While the change is one in name only, it brings before the people the real relation which exists between the individual occupant of a piece of property and the people who are the owners. Now, you can understand why I said, “If by Communism is meant the ownership of all the land by all men, then nationalisation of the land is Communism. But if by Communism is

meant that all men have an equal and common right to the enjoyment of the benefits to be derived from a particular piece of land, then there is no Communism in the nationalisation of the land."

*Taxation and Labour.*

Mr Davitt, I gather from what you have said that all taxation should, in your opinion, rest upon the prosperous. Is not this taxing thrift?

Will you kindly tell me what should be taxed if not accumulation, in whatever form it may take. Taxation, like any other form of payment, is only equable and just when there is a value received as well as a value given. As taxation is the payment for protection in the enjoyment of personal rights, it should rest upon all men equally, because each receives protection in his person from the law. But as protection for property is also given, this should be paid for in proportion to the value protected. If there is anything which should go free, it is labour. A man derives his powers of labour from no government upon earth, and it is wrong that he should be taxed upon their exercise. A government has the right to tax solely upon the value created by its means or through its operations. As accumulation of wealth is so created, it should be taxed. As labour is not so created, it should not.

What are the future aims of the Land League?

They are not changed in any way. The absolute and final abolishment of landlordism, and the attainment of some form of self-government which will see that the land is properly administered, are the aims of the Land League in the future, as in the past. To meet the last plan of the landlords, a change will be necessary in the *modus operandi* of the League. This plan is the formation of a Limited Liability Company, with a capital of £600,000, for the purpose of working farms from which the old tenants have been evicted, and for which, owing to the policy of boycotting, no new tenants can be got. This means, if successful, the expulsion of the Irish race from Ireland, and the substitution of English, Scotch, Norwegian, and Swedish farmers in their place. The landlords have the capital to work the land, but without the labour they can do nothing. They cannot get this labour in Ireland, therefore they intend to import it.

*The Struggle Now and in the Future.*

Mr Kavanagh says truly that either the Land League or landlordism must go down. The struggle is one of life and death. The Landlords' League is but one more in the list of lessons taught the people of Ireland by the men who are starting it—it is a repetition of the lesson of extermination. I think the true method of meeting it will be a confederation of the whole Celtic race, to take in the Land League, the Labour League, and the national movements. I do not, of course, know as yet what plans have been discussed by the leaders on the other side, and I, therefore, cannot say what scheme will be adopted. I only suggest this as one to be discussed. It has already been approved of in this country.

What are the elements of failure and success in the future?

Among the elements of failure are dissension, should any arise, among the leaders; dissension in the ranks, outrages, intemperate or premature action, the effects of the Coercion Bill upon the people in driving them to deeds of desperation, and this new league of the landlords. The elements of success are the strength of the platform, founded as it is upon truth and justice; the objects of the League—the eradication of misery and poverty—which must appeal in the future, as they have done in the past, to the sense of right in the people of other countries; the universal support of

the Irish race, and especially of that portion which is in America ; and the character of the leaders and the wisdom they have shown in the past, which are a sufficient guarantee for wise action in the future. The chance of American sympathy as the objects of the League become better known is a strong element of success. Let me say a word about the Land League's weapon. It has never attempted to win anything by force ; it has merely placed its case before the bar of public opinion throughout the world, and has asked for judgment. Its fight has been purely a moral fight ; its appeal has been and is to public opinion. It has won its way by moral dynamite, and this force will, I think, be strong enough in time to blow up even such a strongly fortified garrison as that which the English Government has in the Irish landlords.

What effect upon the struggle between the League and the English Government will the present trouble in Egypt have ?

O'Connell's dictum that England's difficulty is Ireland's opportunity is a cardinal article of faith in Ireland, but I must say that so far I have not seen that any practical good to the Irish has come out of England's difficulties. It is undoubtedly true that were England placed in such a position as to be forced to withdraw all her troops from Ireland it would probably strike her statesmen with the directness and force of lightning that the Irish had grievances which in strict justice should be remedied, and we would see legislation for Ireland of a different kind from that which we are accustomed to. Whether this present embroglio in Egypt will lead to anything serious no man, of course, can tell. Of late years England has had the luck—shall we say ?—of getting into trouble with small and semi-barbarous States, out of which she has managed to draw with more or less honour to herself, as the case may have been. Witness the Zulu business, for example. If this Egyptian difficulty merely means the conquest of Arabi Bey and his followers, I do not suppose any man will doubt that England is able to accomplish it without drawing upon her army of occupation in Ireland. But should the flames kindled in Alexandria spread into the general conflagration of a holy war—which is quite within the range of possibilities—and should the Prophet's trousers, or whatever portion of his clothes that was fashioned into the holy flag, be unfurled by the Sultan, then England may find that she has a struggle upon her hands as gigantic as any in her history, and one which may involve not alone the route to India but India itself. That Mr Gladstone has in this present contest been influenced largely by Germany I do not think anyone will question. He has certainly alienated France, and just at the present time France holds the position of one of the first, if not the first, naval powers upon the globe. An alliance between France and Russia against England and Germany would not be impossible. Austria and Denmark would probably find that it was to their interest to join any coalition against Germany. Italy would in all likelihood remain neutral unless Germany could throw out sufficient inducement to her. The object of Russia would be the acquisition of Afghanistan, while France would want Alsace and Lorraine. In the event of such complications as these, England would be forced to grant anything Ireland asked for.

#### *Conservative Promises.*

Is it not possible that this Egyptian difficulty may bring about a change of Government in England ?

It is certainly possible that the Egyptian embroglio may bring about in England a revival of what is ordinarily called "Jingoism." Jingoism may

be defined as an aggressive policy in the East, and it is identified with the Conservative or Tory party. Should this happen, Mr Gladstone's Government would go out and the Conservatives under Lord Salisbury would come in. In that case, as the Conservatives are committed to the scheme of peasant proprietary as laid down by Lord Salisbury and Mr W. H. Smith—namely, the advance to the tenant-farmer of sufficient money to purchase his holding—a bill to this effect would undoubtedly be introduced in Parliament. Even in that event it would remain a question whether the Conservatives would be courageous enough to withdraw the troops from Ireland. That they would introduce such a bill I have no doubt, because the policy of the Conservatives, stamped upon them by Mr Disraeli, has been to be more radical than the Liberals in matters of home government. But should the Conservatives grant the measure of relief implied in peasant proprietary, they would undoubtedly enforce the Coercion Bill at the same time even more stringently than Mr Gladstone. It has always been the policy of the English Government to grant concessions to the people of Ireland and to the Castle ring at one and the same time. Really, when one looks at the history of the legislation of England for Ireland, it is enough to make him laugh, if he has studied practical politics. In the first place, there has never been a measure of relief for Ireland introduced into Parliament by an Englishman, except as the result of Irish agitation. The Irish agitate until the English Government can stand it no longer, and then a bill of relief is introduced. This concession is to placate the Irish people. But as any measure for the good of the people is considered an insult to the landlords' party, a sop to Cerberus is thrown in the shape of the imprisonment of the Irish leaders. Every Irishman when he begins agitation knows that he will ultimately succeed in doing something for Ireland, but he knows equally well that he will go to prison sooner or later himself. This policy, although not so pronounced, is still to be seen among the Liberals. Mr Gladstone introduced the Land Act, and put Mr Parnell and the executive of the League into Kilmainham. Now, I do not doubt that did the Conservatives come into power they would introduce a measure of peasant proprietary, but at the same time they would enforce the Coercion Bill, and probably send all of us to jail. The Conservative leaders have declared that they are prepared to give more to Ireland than the Liberals. In any event, whether Mr Gladstone remains in power or Lord Salisbury comes in as his successor, Ireland can only gain from the difficulties into which England is thrown by her foreign policy.

#### *American Competition.*

There are certain economical questions, Mr Davitt, which I think have affected the Land League, but which it has been impossible to discuss in this continuous review of the development of the League itself. As among these, what has been the effect upon Ireland of the competition in meat and breadstuffs by this country?

A very important one. To put the thing in a few words, the American competition in meat has brought about a willingness on the part of the great farmers to contemplate a change, and has thus tended to produce the result which is apparent to-day—namely, that the whole people, with the exception of the landlords, are banded together in the League.

#### *The Influence in England.*

What effect has the American competition in wheat produced?

It has had more effect in England than in Ireland. The rents which were fixed in England before that competition began can no longer be

paid, and the result has been that the farming class there have been forced to contemplate a change of some sort. Directly, this has had nothing to do with the Irish struggle, but indirectly it has affected it greatly. As the League has depended wholly upon the force of public opinion, anything which has affected that in England has had an effect upon Ireland, and it has been found that the ever-growing necessity for a change in England, and the ever-increasing consciousness of that necessity, have resulted in making the English farming class less averse to reflection upon a change in Ireland. The destruction of their conservatism in their own affairs has led to a general "breaking up," so to speak, in their conservatism in other things.

#### *Self-Government for Ireland.*

The immediate object, as I understand it, of the League is the abolishment of landlordism. Another object is the attainment of self-government for Ireland. In the first place, how is this to be done, if done at all, and how will the effort for it differ from former struggles?

To take your second question first, the struggle will differ from former efforts in the fact that landlordism will be destroyed. In all the ineffectual struggles for self-government for Ireland, the people of the country have always been divided. While the Irish race itself has been for the measure, the landlords and the innumerable hangers-on of landlordism have been opposed. The landlords of Ireland have always been England's garrison in the country, and the division existing between the landlords and the people has resulted in a failure. But with the landlords driven out of Ireland the people will become a unit upon the question of self-government. The moral force exerted by them will become infinitely greater, and, as the result is in proportion to the cause, we have a right to expect that self-government will be obtained. As to how this will be done the answer is very simple. It can only be arrived at by a concession on the part of England. It is absurd to imagine that it can be obtained in any other way. The reasons why England will grant it are somewhat complex. The force of public opinion, a conviction that experiments in governing Ireland from London have been carried to that point where it is useless trying any more, a belief that the agitation prevents needed legislation in English and imperial matters being considered, the belief that Ireland in her present state costs England more money than she contributes to the imperial exchequer—or, in other words, the belief that it does not pay commercially to continue the present relation between the two countries, are among the reasons which will act upon the English people. When these and others bring about a belief that it is better that Ireland should be separated from England, as far as local administration is concerned, then the English Government will grant self-government to Ireland.

#### *Could Ireland Retain Self-Government.*

But supposing that self-government is so granted, do you suppose that England will concede it in the form of a vested right? Will she not retain the theoretical power, as she always must the practical, to revoke the grant at any time?

Of course, should England grant Ireland self-government, she could revoke the concession at any time, being so immeasurably the stronger power. That is self evident. She would retain control of the army in Ireland, and she would not consent to an Irish army being formed. She would probably retain the veto power for the Lord Lieutenant upon all

acts of the Irish Parliament, although this would be opposed by the Irish people. But if the Irish people, under self-government, showed themselves fully capable of managing their own affairs, if they proved beyond a question that they appreciated the benefits and were not disposed to abuse the privileges of such government, England would never have any reason to revoke the concession. Of all people in the world the English are the most disposed to let "well enough alone," and if they found Ireland tranquil and prosperous they would have no wish to make any change. Besides, the English people are not Ireland's enemies; it is the English Government that listens to Ireland's enemies, the landlords, and believes their statements. As before any self-government can be obtained, the landlords, as far as their Irish connection is concerned, must be abolished, the English Government will no longer have any class constantly prompting them to deeds of injustice to Ireland. There is another thing. While the veto power, which England will endeavour to vest in the Lord Lieutenant, will probably be used somewhat freely at first—subject, of course, to the judgment of the English people upon its exercise as expressed in the House of Commons—it will probably be found that as time goes on the actual or supposed necessity for its use will diminish, and the Lord Lieutenant will gradually become like the Governor-General of Canada, merely the representative of the Queen, presiding over a Parliament led by a responsible Ministry. I also believe that the effect of self-government upon the Irish people would be such as to make it exceedingly difficult to deprive them of it. It would weld them into a homogeneous race, knowing the blessings of freedom and able to exercise sufficient moral power to prevent the taking of that freedom from them. They would be a stronger because a wealthier race, and it is not likely that a repetition of the policy which led to the Union of 1800 would be possible. No English Ministry would dare to bribe as Pitt did, and, the landlords being removed, I feel sure that no majority of Irish representatives would be found who could be bribed. Let Ireland once get self-government and she would keep it. If she, by any act of her own, lost it, she would have to bear the consequences.

What form of self-government will the Irish want?

In order to answer that question it will be necessary for me to refer to the history of Ireland very briefly. In 1782, when the English Government had the troubles on the Continent and in this country on its hands, Ireland was threatened with a French invasion. The Mayor of Belfast applied to the English Government for troops, but received the answer that Ireland must take care of herself, as England could spare no troops to protect her. That set the famous Irish Volunteer movement on foot, in which 200,000 Irish Protestant Volunteers were recruited and armed with rifles and cannon in a very short space of time. Upon these cannon were the words, "Legislative Independence or —!" The significant blank was sufficient, and the then English Government granted legislative independence to Ireland. When George the Third became insane and Pitt made George the Fourth Regent, the Irish Parliament passed a most stupid address praying him to assume regal functions, and saying that if he would come to Ireland they would crown him as king. This excess of loyalty on the part of the Irish made Pitt exceedingly angry, and he resolved to suppress the Irish Parliament. He goaded the people up to the insurrection of 1798, and, having this excuse, bribed the members of the Irish Parliament to vote for the Union of 1800. The Repeal movement meant a return to the condition of affairs before the Union—namely, an Irish House of

Commons and House of Lords. The Repeal movement under O'Connell failed. The Home Rule party ask for independence in local government but a representation in the Imperial Parliament; in other words, they want the same relation between Ireland and England that exists between the State of New York and the Federal Government. This programme is exceedingly unpopular with the Nationalist section of the Irish people, as they claim that it implies a policy of renunciation. I believe that there is a compromise possible, and a plan upon which Repealers, Home Rulers, and Nationalists can unite. I believe, too, that what I am about to propose England might be induced to grant. I want Ireland to have a constitution similar to that in Canada—the Government to consist of a Lord Lieutenant or Governor, a Senate or Upper House, and an Assembly or House of Commons. The Governor would, of course, be appointed by the Crown, and would in all probability be invested for a time with the power of veto upon the measures passed. Upon this point I have already spoken at length. The House of Commons to be elected upon the basis of universal suffrage, the membership to be in proportion to the census, and the duration of office to be any term of years to be fixed upon. The Ministry in the House of Commons should be responsible, as it is now in England, and the general powers of the House to be those of the English House of Commons. The members of the Senate, or Upper House, should be two in number from each section of country agreed upon, and each Senator shall hold his position for a term of ten years. At first these should be arranged in such a way as to have one-fifth of the Senatorships fall in every two years, so that of those appointed at first, one-fifth of the whole number, or as near that fraction as practicable, should hold office for two years, the second fifth for four, the third for six, the fourth for eight, and the fifth for ten. Every Senator appointed after the first members of that body would, of course, hold office for the full term. Each Senatorial District would have two Senators in the Upper House; but these should be alternately appointed, one every five years. The method of appointment should be as follows:—The popular party for the time being—or, to use the nomenclature of the English, the Ministry—should nominate the men for the vacant Senatorships. Of those so nominated the English Government, through the Lord Lieutenant, should appoint one of the two from each Senatorial District and the Irish House of Commons should appoint the other. This arrangement would give the Irish House of Commons the nomination of all the Senators, and would divide the appointments between itself and the Lord Lieutenant. This would, I think, be a fair plan to both England and Ireland.

In the event of self-government being granted, would the taxation of the English people be reduced? In other words, does it cost England any money to keep Ireland in its present condition?

That is a question which is exceedingly difficult to answer. Over and over again the Irish members have asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer for the figures relating to Irish expenditures, but without getting any satisfactory answer. England believes that Ireland costs her a great deal of money, while Irishmen will tell you that Ireland pays for her own degradation. My own belief is—and it is merely a belief, because I do not know—that the policy in Ireland, involving as it does an expensive army, a costly constabulary and legal machinery, the maintenance of which draws heavily upon the English Exchequer, costs England more than the seven millions of pounds which Ireland pays each year into the Imperial Treasury, and I believe that it is the knowledge of this fact



which causes the English Chancellors of the Exchequer to refuse information upon the subject. I know, however, that in case of self-government in Ireland the cost of the government would be much less than it is now. Ten per cent. of the present constabulary force would be amply sufficient for police purposes, for nine-tenths are employed as a bodyguard for the landlords. Many other expenses which now have to be provided for would then be abolished. Ireland would save money by the change, and I believe England would do the same.

What would be the effect upon Irish manufactures?

It does not need very profound study of political economy to know that increasing the amount of money retained in a country will stimulate that country's manufactures. Keep £12,000,000 a year in Ireland, and how long will it be before that gravitates into manufacturing industries? But we can refer in this matter to history. When, between 1782 and 1800, Ireland had legislative independence, her manufactures increased with a rapidity that was marvellous. The prosperity of Ulster in this regard may be traced, I think, to the protection existing there for improvements and the consequent better financial condition of the country.

In our interview so far, Mr Davitt, we have traced the actions upon the Irish people of the different political and economical movements prior to the time of the inception of the League. In the history of the League itself we have followed the movement from the lecturing tour in this country through the Irishtown and subsequent meetings, the general election of 1800, the State trials, the imprisonment of the suspects, the Kilmainham Treaty, the work of the Ladies' Land League, and the assassination, to the Coercion Bill passed a few days ago. We have examined into the economical questions which affected the League indirectly, and we have inquired into the possible effect on the League of the European political complications. You have sketched out briefly your plan for self-government in Ireland, and given your views on the effect such self-government would have commercially upon the country. Is there any question affecting the Land League which you can think of that has not been touched upon?

I cannot say there is. I may freely confess that the plan submitted to me when we began has been more than carried out, and that my own knowledge of the movement has been greatly improved by the searching and exhaustive method of talk we have had. I look upon the interview as the most important piece of work I have been able to do for the Land League, because I think that it will give the American people such an insight into the causes which led to the movement and the forces which affected it that they will have, possibly for the first time, an idea of the struggle now going on in Ireland. Had my visit to this country resulted in nothing besides this interview, I should look upon it as being thoroughly successful.

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

MR DAVITT'S PROPOSALS FOR THE FORMATION OF THE NATIONAL LAND AND INDUSTRIAL UNION OF IRELAND.

UPON returning from America, Mr Davitt submitted the following plans of reform and organisation to Mr Parnell, as the best

means, in his (Mr Davitt's) opinion, to revive the National and Social movement, and combat the new devices of Kavanagh and the landlord party. The proposals are copied from the *New York Daily News*, of which paper Mr Davitt is the special European correspondent:—

The formation of a national organisation to be known as The National Land and Industrial Union of Ireland.

*Object.*—To improve the social and political condition of the Irish people.

*Means to Attain that Object.*—The employment of such legal and constitutional resources as may be best calculated to bring about the following reforms:—

*Social.*—1. The complete abolition of the landlord system. 2. The amelioration of the condition of the agricultural labourers. 3. The erection of better dwellings for the people.

*Industrial.*—4. The revival of manufacturing industries. 5. Development of Irish fisheries. 6. Improvement in methods of land cultivation. 7. Establishment of a land and labour association for the purchase of land upon which to locate evicted tenants.

*Educational.*—8. To improve the scientific and practical education of the artisan and labouring classes by the establishment of Mechanics' (evening) Institutes throughout the country. 9. Encouragement of national literature and cultivation of the Irish language.

*Political.*—10. Repeal of the Act of Union and obtainment of Irish Self-Government. 11. The abolition of the Grand Jury system of County Government. 12. Improvement of representation on Local Boards and Municipal Bodies.

And, Pending the Repeal of the Act of Union, to effect

— A more National Parliamentary Representation. — The payment of National Representatives. — The Extension of the Franchise. These necessary reforms, for the contentment and progress of Ireland, to be demanded by her people on the ground of their reasonableness and justice, and to be striven for in such a manner as not to bring the members of the National Land and Industrial Union of Ireland into conflict with the law. Also, so as to obtain the sympathy and moral support of external public opinion for a people's efforts to change a destiny of poverty and discontent to a condition of prosperity and happiness. To convince the English Parliament (through the medium of which the chief of those reforms are to be obtained) of the necessity and expediency of their being granted to Ireland, the conditions of success require that her people shall be united in the necessary efforts to enlist public opinion in the cause of remedial legislation. The form of union best calculated to effect this is, that of an open, national organisation such as may be possible under the existing state of the law in Ireland.

To this end it is proposed to establish a legal popular combination in Ireland to be known as "The National Land and Industrial Union of Ireland." It shall be thoroughly non-sectarian, and will consist of such portion of the population of Ireland as may volunteer to become members thereof. It shall be organised into: First—Parish Branches. Second—Electoral District Branches. Third—County Central Branches. Fourth—Provincial Executive Branches. Fifth—Central Executive Council. A *Parish Branch* shall consist of the inhabitants residing within the

recognised boundaries of such parish, and shall have for its officers a president, secretary, and treasurer, with two representative delegates, forming the parish executive, for the government of such branch.

The duties of such executive shall be:—1. To levy contributions and forward same to the central treasurer or trustees of the National Land and Industrial Union. 2. To look within the boundaries of the parish branch to the furthering of the interests of each and all the reforms specified above.

*Electoral District Branches.*—These branches shall consist of the Representative Delegates from each parish branch within each Electoral District. They shall elect an Executive Committee of five, the members of which shall act as chairman in rotation.

The duties of the E. D. Branch shall be:—1. To look to the proper registration of voters throughout the district. 2. To arbitrate in disputes between members of the parish branches within the district. 3. To act as canvassing agents for national candidates during general and casual elections. 4. To aid in the election of popular representatives on local boards.

*County Central Branches.*—A County Central Branch shall consist of delegates elected by a County Convention of Parish Branch Representatives, such representatives to be specially elected by each parish branch. They shall appoint a County Executive Committee of three.

The duties of a County Central Branch shall be: First—To supervise county organisations generally. Second—To collect for and transmit to the Provincial Executive Branch all information touching the interests and objects of the National Land and Industrial Union that may be required from the county. Third—To elect the County Representatives on the Provisional Branch. Fourth—To watch over the general interests of the National Land and Industrial Union within the county.

*Provincial Executive Branches.*—These branches shall consist of representatives from the County Branches within each province. They shall elect a Provincial Committee of three members for the transaction of general business within the province.

The duties of a Provincial Branch shall be: First—The calling of the Provincial Convention whenever necessary. Second—The performance of similar duties for the province as those specified by the County Branches for each county.

*The Central Executive Council of the Irish National Land and Industrial Union of Ireland* to be elected as follows:—Ulster, Leinster, Munster and Connaught shall each, in a Provincial Convention of County Delegates, elect Five Provincial Members. The twenty members thus elected shall have power to co-opt five additional members. The Central Executive Council shall elect a president, three honorary secretaries, and three trustees for the general management of the affairs of the Council. The duties of the Central Council shall be such as may be deemed necessary to bring about the reforms which constitute the programme of the National Land and Industrial Union of Ireland. It shall be empowered, if deemed practicable, to establish, in connection with the National Land and Industrial Union, a Co-operative Land and Labour Association for the working of unoccupied and waste land, with a capital of £1,000,000, in shares of £1 each. Such association to have for objects the providing of profitable occupation for labourers and evicted tenants, with the view of preventing emigration and increasing the general prosperity of the country.

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